DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 431 060 UD 032 962

AUTHOR	Murphy, Jean C.
TITLE	Black Hegemony, a Significant Influence in the School Success of High-Achieving African Americans.
PUB DATE	1998-06-02
NOTE	265p.; Doctoral Dissertation, National-Louis University.
PUB TYPE	Dissertations/Theses - Doctoral Dissertations (041)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; Biographies; Black Culture; *Blacks; *Educational Attainment; *Socialization; *Values
IDENTIFIERS	*African Americans; Gates (Henry Louis Jr); *Hegemony; Lawrence (Margaret Morgan); Taulbert (Clifton L)

ABSTRACT

This is an interpretive study of the influence of Black Hegemony on the academic success of three successful African Americans: Clifton L. Taulbert, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Margaret Morgan Lawrence. All three spent their youth in southern communities strongly influenced by Jim Crow laws and customs, and their academic accomplishments were influenced by the extraordinary influence of Black Hegemony, a socialization process in the African American community that influences and facilitates academic success. Black Hegemony is defined as the complex ordering and patterning of behaviors, creeds, and ways of thinking, along with the educational traditions, practices, and values that are found in African American culture. Examining the lives of these three subjects shows how they were successfully socialized into the world of school and academia. Taulbert, businessman and well-known speaker, Lawrence, author and child psychiatrist, and Gates, author and historian, present unique voices and perspectives on African American life as affected by aspects of Black Hegemony, especially a belief in education as the key to success. (Contains 8 figures and 82 references.) (Author/SLD)

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BLACK HEGEMONY: A SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE IN THE SCHOOL SUCCESS OF HIGH-ACHIEVING AFRICAN AMERICANS

Jean C. Murphy

Instructional Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

Doctor of Education

in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education
National-Louis University

June 2, 1998

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Black Hegemony, A Significant Influence in the School Success of High-Achieving African Americans

Black Hegemony, A Significant Influence in the School Success of African Americans - Jean C. Murphy

National College of Education, National-Louis University

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ABSTRACT

This is an interpretive study of the influence of Black Hegemony on the academic success of three successful African Americans. Clifton L. Taulbert (Taulbert), Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr (Gates)., and Dr. Margaret Morgan Lawrence (Lawrence). Taulbert, Gates and Lawrence spent their growing-up years in southern communities strongly influenced by Jim Crow laws and customs, their academic accomplishments were influenced by the extraordinary influence of Black Hegemony, a socialization process resident within the African-American community which influences and facilitates academic success.

I am defining Black Hegemony in the context of cultural dimension which reflect the conceptions of scholars' Appel, Persell, Schwebel, and Wirth, versus Gramsci's structural conceptions. Black Hegemony is the complex ordering and patterning of behaviors, creeds andways of thinking, the educational traditions, practices and values that are cultivated and found resident in African-American culture. It is my thesis that Black Hegemony, as I have defined it in the context of scholarly works cited, has been a dynamic and enabling force in the school and academic success of high-achieving African Americans.

Aspects of Black Hegemony are important ingredients of academic achievement; they are correlational in nature, tied together, mutually related to each other. Although research findings on academic achievement among African Americans have been successful in isolating factors that affect children's academic achievement, they have failed

to tie these factors together into one holistic theory on how achievement progresses within the African-American community.

It was found that Black Hegemony was the vehicle through which these three high achievers were successfully socialized into the world of school and academia (college). Dimensions of Black Hegemony (i.e., belief in education as "the" way to-make-it, psychological coping mechanisms such as: resilience and perseverance, political and social activism, and family and spiritual values) were common strands that manifested themselves throughout their growing- up lives, and significantly influenced their school successes. Dimensions of Black Hegemony were shown to have exceptional importance in the culture and school experiences of these three African Americans.

Findings emerging from this research study inspired me to share the legacy of Black Hegemony with the academic community, and to offer it up for consideration as a significant infuence and corelant in the ongoing educational achievement of African-American children.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks and God's Grace to my family for the legacy of African-American achievement that they communicated through oral tradition and parental example. Throughout my growing-up years, my parents Lue Walter Stephens and Veola Mae Drain Stephens, integrated dimensions of Black Hegemony in our daily living, influencing my academic achievement in ways that would have lasting affects. To my husband, Dr. Larry G. Murphy, I offer special thanks for the level of academic excellence he has modeled over the years, his kind and generous spirit, continuous patience and encouragement, personal sacrifice, and understanding throughout this lengthy dissertation process. And to our son, Ayinde Murphy, for his personal inspiration and critique of my work, and the opportunity to promote and extend dimensions of Black Hegemony in his life.

To Drs. Patricia Hulsebosch, Sue Jungck, Kenneth Kantor, and Charles Thomas all members of my dissertation committee, I was encouraged and motivated by your belief in the efficacy of my ideas, for wrestling with them and for the collegial and generative nature of our meetings. I learned a great deal about the nature of academic discourse and scholarly pursuits. I grew in many ways as a result of the professional manner in which our engagements proceeded.

I wish to give a special thanks to Drs. Patricia Hulsebosch and Sue Jungck for their tireless hours of reading and editorial comments. They helped me to pursue and carefully think through the topic of my passion, academic achievement among African Americans

Chapter One

Introduction

"Black Hegemony," a significant correlate in the school success of African-American students, is the primary focus of this thesis (see Figure 1-1). Black Hegemony is defined as the complex ordering and patterning of behaviors, creeds and ways of thinking, the educational traditions, practices and values that are cultivated and found resident in African-American culture. The hegemonic interests of African Americans are typically cultural and positive in nature, they are often concerned with the patterning of values, life styles, behavioral reactions and beliefs. Values that demand respect for the elderly, family and community, hard work, and stick-to-it-ness (Edleman, 1992) characterize the general cultural behavior of high achieving-African Americans. Emphasis on education as the way-to-make-it; resilience; perseverance and the capacity to struggle in the face of adversity; community and political activism; good home training (Bates & Hudson, 1996); and spiritual and affective (e.g., feelings and emotions) behaviors are other key elements in the constellation of beliefs and practices that characterize what I have termed Black Hegemony.

Conventional definitions of hegemony are typically structural in nature, concerned with systems of power, wealth, influence, class struggle and social dominance, and are often

attributed to Gramsci (in Fiske, 1971). Gramsci suggests that hegemony emerges from struggle in the realm of social, economic and political life, and that it is an ongoing process of an unequal struggle between social forces in which subordinates consent to the oppressive system that subordinates them. His theories of social dominance, power and privilege have been adopted by theorists to the degree that his is "the" accepted and prevailing definition used in the anthropology and sociology of education literature. Foley (1991), for example, makes reference to Gramsci's interpretation in his critique of Ogbu's Caste theory of involuntary minorities by pointing out recent studies of "ethnic resistance" to mainstream Cultural hegemony. Willis (in Foley) makes use of Gramsci's definition in his description of the class struggles of working class youth who largely resist the conventional thoughts of their middle class teachers in British schools. The same interpretation is evident in Boykin's (1986) definition of hegemony, "the mainstream and the minority do not simply exist side by side; one of them has hegemony over the other." (p.67) Kanpol (1994) speaks of hegemony in relation to the dominant values and meanings found in schools that control, subordinate and alienate.

Noted scholars of color also provide contemporary expressions of Gramsci's definition of hegemony and class struggle. Ogbu's perspectives (1986) can be found in his often quoted work, "The Consequences of the American System of Caste Stratification." His ideas on the school achievement of African Americans focus on issues of caste and social dominance, aspects of his conventional definitions of hegemony. For example, he posits that African-American children tend to perform on the low end of the academic scale as a result of the lower caste system in which they are born. Fordham's (1988) infamous

study, "Raceiessness as a Factor in Black Student's School Success: Pragmatic Strategy of Pyrrhic Victory," echos with strands of Gramscian notions of social dominance. She argues that African-Amercan children must become raceless in order to achieve academically; they do so by adopting the hegemonic values which are traditionally hegemonic in nature, and which overshadow those of their own African-American culture. And finally, Shade (1982), author of "Afro-American Cognitive Style: A Variable in School Success" maintains that the cultural and perceptual styles of African Americans have worked to their detriment in school settings, resulting in academic disadvantage and unequal access to what Lisa Delpit (1995) refers to as the "culture of power" or the rules and behaviors that lead to academic success. In all the scholarly conceptions mentioned in this and preceding paragraphs, conventional definitions of hegemony such as subordination, exclusivity and dominance are implied.

Apple (in Boykin, 1986) and Wirth (1936) provide for me elaborated perspectives on hegemony that are defined in much broader and more inclusive terms than Gramsci's. Apple suggests that hegemony is "an organized assemblage of meanings and practices that include values and actions which are lived," which constitute one's "ordinary understanding of man and his world," and are tantamount to one's "sense of reality" (p.5). Wirth suggests an equivalent definition to that of Apple's: "hegemony embodies the expectations of the way people do things, the way people behave, the significant moments, traditions and practices." Both Apple and Wirth emphasize meaning making, the emic manner in which people interact with one another. Although hegemony has taken on negative connotations in many academic circle, I've come to understand through their

elaborated definitions of hegemony that its meaning is not always negative. Hegemony can also be amiable, affable and enabling.

Persell (1977) and Schwebel (1975) articulate corresponding definitions, but provide further elaboration in their definition of hegemony by suggesting that it is necessarily biased by the interests of those with power. Those interests, they assert, can be either *structural*--concerned with the distribution of power, wealth, and status, or *cultural*--concerned with the patterning of values, life styles, behavioral reactions, and beliefs. Gramscian definitions of hegemony are structural in nature and most often grounded in theories of class conflict. On the other hand the elaborated discussions of hegemony posited by Apple, Wirth, Persell and Schwebel provide a sound basis for understanding the cultural dimensions of hegemony. It is in this context that conceptions of Black Hegemony emerged in my thinking.

I am defining Black Hegemony in the context of cultural dimensions which reflect the conceptions of scholars' Apple, Persell, Schwebel, and Wirth, versus Gramsci's structural conceptions. Black Hegemony, as stated in the beginning pages of this dissertation proposal, is the complex ordering and patterning of behaviors, creeds and ways of thinking, the educational traditions, practices and values that are cultivated and found resident in African-American culture. The hegemonic interests of African Americans are typically cultural in nature, concerned with the patterning of values, life styles, behavioral reactions and beliefs. Values that demand respect for the elderly, family and community, hard work, perseverance and resilience characterize the general cultural behavior of high achieving African Americans. Emphasis on education as the way-to make-it, the capacity

to struggle in the face of adversity, community and political activism, and spiritual and affective behaviors are other key elements in the constellation of beliefs and practices that characterizes what I have termed Black Hegemony. It is my thesis that Black Hegemony, as I have defined it in the context of scholarly works cited above, has been a dynamic and enabling force in the school and academic success of high-achieving African Americans. Aspects of Black Hegemony are important ingredients of academic achievement; they are correlational in nature, tied together, mutually related to each other. Although research findings on academic achievement among African Americans have been successful in isolating factors that affect children's academic achievement. They have failed to tie these factors together into one holistic theory on how achievement progresses within the African-American community.

It appears to me that the interests or concerns of African Americans have been more cultural than structural in nature. Their creeds and ways of thinking, the traditions and behavioral patterns have served as the undergirding power and influence that has enabled high academic performance and school success. In the historical drama of African-American lives the interests and concerns of those with power and influence over children's developing lives have manifested themselves in a number of significant ways:

- in the creation of strategies to help young children develop coping mechanisms for living in segregated and discriminatory environments (perseverance and resilience);
- in the development of effective interventions that serve to immunize them against racial, social, and civil policies designed to discourage access and opportunity (attendance at northern schools, church and Sabbath schools);

- in the development of a faith and belief system that facilitated the development of sufficient ego strength to withstand the negative imaging of African Americans as intellectual and cultural misfits.

Black Hegemony appears to me to be pervasive and dominant, in the same way as structural hegemony. However, it appears not to contain dimensions of class struggle. Rather, Black Hegemony contains elements of class harmony, unifying traits that, when integrated, combine into an enabling force undergirding, influencing and promoting achievement. It appears that Black Hegemony is "the" process through which African-American children are successfully socialized into the academic world. History tells us that mainstream society provided few, if any supports for the successful socialization of African Americans. So, I have concluded through my research, that the many evidences of academic success, as indicated by empirical and qualitative data contained in this study, occurred as a result of factors resident within the African-American community.

As I reflected on dimensions of Black Hegemony, I am reminded, once again, of the *cultural interests or* hegemonic proclivities of African Americans. I was reminded of the strong spiritual anchors, footholds and compasses passed on to me and other African-American children by their parents, grandparents, preachers and teachers. As I read the poetry of Mona Lake Jones (1993) I was reminded of her evocation to African-Americans to be storytellers of our history, traditions and culture so that we might help others who haven't made it. As I read the works of Andrew Billingsley (1992) I was reminded of the history of African American individuals, families, communities and institutions that achieved against the odds. African Americans who achieved as a result of black

hegemonic experiences such as, an emphasis on education as the way-to-make-it, spiritual and familial values, humanitarianism, adaptability, creative ability to make a way-out-of-no way, and a general resourcefulness, insured educational success for the past and present realities. These readings inspired me to share this legacy of Black Hegemony with the academic community, and to offer it up for consideration as a significant influence and correlate in the ongoing educational achievement of African-American children.

The concept of Black Hegemony has its genesis with me. I feel a sense of passion about the concept and have discovered a compelling drive to study and research it for this dissertation effort. As an African-American who has a history of success in academic institutions, and as an educator who is committed to establishing a working construct for envisioning and creating sound educational policy to undergird educational practice, I am charged by persons such as Mona Lake Jones to "tell the story" and Marian Wright Edelman to "share the legacy," so that others might succeed.

I believe that a careful examination of Black Hegemony can serve as a useful heuristic for the media, power brokers, policy makers, educators, school administrators, academicians, and researchers who need familiar acquaintance with the ongoing achievement of African-American students and factors that influence it. Communicating the power and strength of these hegemonic experiences, and their relevance to educational practice is my primary interest.

Focus and Significance of the Study

It is my thesis that, historically, cultural interests, as expressed through the hegemonic experiences of high achieving-African Americans, have served as a generative force

undergirding academic and social achievement. Narrative stories of famous and little-known African Americans bear witnesses to this theory. African-American literature is rich with stories chronicling aspects of Black Hegemony. The stories are replete with examples of the cultural interests and hegemonic experiences of African Americans. Perseverance, resilience, familial sacrifice and support, a view of education as "the" way to make it, and spiritual beliefs are laced throughout the stories of high-achieving African Americans. The pervasiveness of their presence is quite evident in the narrative stories of African-Americans, and they serve to undergird, bolster, nurture and advance academic and school achievement.

Bourdieu's conceptions of cultural capital provide context for understanding academic achievement in high-achieving African Americans. "He suggests that family life provides resources ('capital') which yield important social profits (Bourdieu 1977a; 1984). Similarly, Ann Swidler has conceptualized culture as a:

> . . .tool-kit of symbols, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems (Swidler, 1986, p. 273).

The legacy of achieving against racial and economic oppression, of making a way out of no way, of achieving in spite of being the victims of centuries of civil, social and cultural discrimination is a form of cultural capital that distinguishes the accomplishments of African-Americans from other groups. It is my thesis that the very hegemonic traits cited throughout this study have served as a source of wealth, like stocks and bonds, that generate and facilitate academic and social development. While Bourdieu's conceptions of cultural capital were based in French society, and center on social class and its role in

influencing school achievement and status attainment (Bourdieu 19771, 1977b, Bourdieu and Passeron 1977), they have application in this study. His and Swidler's notions of cultural capital suggest that resources of the culture, family and community can be transformed into resources that influence and facilitate success and adjustment in school setting. I am defining cultural capital in this context - educational and spiritual values, family and community patterns and behaviors that helped to nurture self esteem, resilience and perseverance -- all aspects of Black Hegemony -- that resulted in school achievement. Values and patterns that, I argue, served to immunize African-American students against racism and to allow them to navigate their way through oppressive educational institutions, systems and classroom practices that served as barriers to academic achievement. In essence, these values and patterns were the "tool-kit" (Swidler) or the "culture of power" (Delpit) that served as effective interventions to school success (see Figure 1-2). Clifton Taulbert (1989, pp. 5-6), author of When We Were Colored, would most likely refer to cultural capital as a "treasure more valuable and enduring than land ownership . . . a source of strength." Edelman (1992, p.3), author of Measure of Our Success, would most likely attribute cultural capital to " . . . caring Black adults (who) were buffers against the segregated and hostile outside world that told us we weren't important."

However, this same perspective on the cultural capital of African Americans and its influence on achievement is not evident to various publics such as the general public, educational and academic communities, and policy makers. Consequently, the recurrent and ongoing achievement of high-achieving AfricanAmerican students is not an established

construct from which to envision and construct sound educational policy and practice.

The few instances in which the mass media reports on African-American academic achievement leaves the impression that factors influencing academic achievement are all external to the African-American community--hence the need for compensatory education-hence the need for school reform and educational interventions such as cooperative learning, mastery learning, direct instruction, and Distar. In contrast, the literature of scholars such as Andrew Billingsley (1992), Robert Hill (1971) and Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998) reminds us that the African-American community has a long history and heritage of achievement -- born out of internal strengths contained within the black community. Their research identifies strengths and aspects of cultural capital that are generative in nature and scope: spiritual, psychological, family, and community. These strengths, they argue, and I concur, constitute the building blocks for educational achievement: achievement that is sufficiently recurrent and widespread to be framed an educational construct for future study, research and practice on the larger issue of achievement in "all" children. It is to the writings and published works of these and like scholars that I will turn as a source for interpretive research.

Enormous societal effort has been exerted to limit or block the access of African Americans to educational opportunities and advancements. The power brokers of America have a history of resorting to subterfuge, legal and civil restrictions, violence and restrictive institutional policies (i.e., tracking, magnet schools), all designed to foster and maintain "white privilege" (McIntosh, 1990) and the educational underdevelopment of African Americans and other minorities. The mere fact that so much energy is and has

been devoted to restricting black educational access, and the tremendous progress of Blacks despite these systematic hindrances lend great credence to my argument that many African Americans have achieved as a result of the strengths, "toolkits' (Swidler, 1986) and cultural capital resident within their community. It lays groundwork for my thesis that resilience, stick-to-it-ness, perseverance and other Black hegemonic traits have, indeed, influenced the achievements and progress made by many accomplished African Americans. Students of Bourdieu (the French sociologist) and cultural capital, would suggest that school outcomes such as successful school matriculation and academic performance of high-achieving African Americans are expressions of the "social profits" that result from the resources ('capital') of Black Hegemony. And, I concur (see Figure 1-3).

The research works and efforts of many African-American scholars focus on singular aspects or components of cultural capital that contribute to the success of high-achieving African-Americans. For example, the following African-American authors have focused their efforts on the human capital within the African-American family: Andrew Billingsley (1992) on the family within the larger societal framework; Robert Hill (1971) on family strengths; Reginald Clark (1985) on the psychological-dynamics within low-income families; and Maxine Clark (1991) and Diana Slaughter (1987) on the home environment as reinforcement of the school environment. Other authors have focused their research on another form of cultural capital resident within the African-American community: dedicated and committed African-American teachers. Michelle Foster (1997) has interviewed senior and contemporary teachers and examined their perspectives on achievement; Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) has conducted similar research lending voice

to teachers, who on the front line, have engaged in the types of teacher behaviors that produce achievers and achievement behaviors. And finally, resilience and perseverance, as forms of cultural capital, have been written about and studied by a number of educators and researchers: Marian Wright Edelman (1992), K.Wilson-Sadberry (1991), A. Garibaldi (1991), and L.K. Winfield (1991). These singular dimensions of cultural capital such as family, dedicated African-American teachers, and resilience and perseverance have been studied and examined by these and other writers. However, no one has examined the combined impact of African-American cultural capital: what I have coined as Black Hegemony - and its compounded impact on achievement in African-American students. This is the primary focus of my dissertation.

The media driven image of African-American students as non-achievers is pernicious and dogged. The net effect is the negative imaging of African-American students as a low achieving, non-accomplished group. This negative impression often prevents the general public from acknowledging historical and contemporary achievers in the African-American community. It overshadows the legion of students who have already mastered, and those currently mastering and excelling in traditional academic domains such as reading, math, science and the arts. Failure of the media, powerbrokers and decision-makers (powerbrokers) to advance the current research literature on the strengths and cultural capital of African-American families results in an oversight by members of the educational community to bring meaningful and significant resolution to the issue of academic failure among African-American students. It is my firm belief that the educational community would be much further along in its resolution of this issue if they were operating from a

basis of strength: an awareness, knowledge and acceptance of the history, legacy and strengths of high achieving African-Americans.

The current fascination with the negative and pernicious imaging of African-American students has blinded the general public, schools, educators and powerbrokers to more fundamental questions about achievement among African-Americans:

> How is it that Black Hegemony has enabled so many black children to matriculate through racist educational institutions, systems (e.g., segregated schools with inferior and dated books and instructional materials, low funding) and practices (e.g., tracking) designed to disadvantage them?
>
> What is it about Black Hegemony that had the greatest influence on the academic achievement of contemporary African-American achievers such as Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Clifton Taulbert, and Margaret Morgan Lawrence?

These questions form the basis of this dissertation effort.

Relevance of Black Hegemony

The historical, and biographical literature of African-Americans is rich with narrative stories of accomplished African-Americans. The stories of African Americans have elements of Black Hegemony in them: individuals and/or families that were spiritually grounded, community oriented, valued education, sacrificed, and persevered. These stories include those of: Marian Wright Edelman, Rosa Parks, Johnetta Cole, Harriet Tubman, W E. B. DuBois, Frederick Douglas, Clarence Thomas, Martin Luther King, Jr., Madame C. J. Walker, Mary McCloud Bethune, Earl Graves, Booker T. Washington, John H. Johnson, Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot, Colin Powell, and Mae Jamison. They all

were/are accomplished African-Americans whose growing-up years and schooling experiences have elements of Black Hegemony that might well have contributed to their school and eventual professional success.

African American genius gave rise to a great many inventions which support America's reputation as the most advanced country in the world. African-American genius is responsible for: the first open-heart surgery; the first telegraph system by rail; the first clock made in America; the first blood bank; walkie talkies; the Civil Rights and other freedom movements; the crucial research that miniaturized the microchip; the design of Washington, D.C.; the first technique for separating and preserving blood plasma; crop rotation in agriculture; opera singers like Leontyne Price, Kathleen Battle and Marion Anderson; and countless other contributions to American and international societies. It is my thesis that the genius of these and many other African Americans emerged as a result of the cultural capital these individuals brought to their school experiences. It was their undeniable intellectual prowess, persistence, resilience in the face of undaunting odds, spiritual and cultural practices, and century-long belief in education as "the" way to make it that contributed to their school and eventual professional success.

As I think about the literature of African-American writers I am reminded of the strong spiritual anchors, footholds and compasses passed on to me by my own parents and grandparents. My parents' and grandparents' lives were steeped in activity (i.e., religious, Civil Rights' struggles, and educational occupations) that eventuated in their children's, grand and great grandchildren's school successes. While my maternal grandparents had no formal schooling beyond elementary school, they were accomplished and celebrated

community activists. My grandfather, Frank Drain (affectionately known as Deacon Drain) received many awards from the City of Gadsden, Alabama for his efforts in the Civil Rights' struggle of his days. Deacon Drain was recognized by white and African-American communities as the official spokesperson for the black community. It was his leadership, community organizing and demonstrating that resulted in the integration of stores and restaurants in this southern town. He established a legacy of persistence and struggle against the odds that resides in many of his children and grandchildren today. My grandmother, Mary Drain, with her third grade education, managed to accomplish an outstanding reputation in her own right. She was known, all around the city of Gadsden for her missionary and community work. They were quite a dynamic couple whose black hegemonic influences (spiritual, civic and educational aspirations for their children) inspired the school success of their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

My grandparents' emphasis on spiritual development was expressed in their regular church attendance, participation in church activities, and religious instruction of their five children. Religious behaviors and practices such as references to biblical passages (e.g., "Honor thy father and mother") and characters (Saul who became Paul, David whose faith enabled the slaying of Goliath the giant) for standards of everyday behavior were frequently made. These standards and images influenced my mother's, aunts' and uncles' school success; each of them finished high school, which was quite an accomplishment and no small feat in a time period prior to desegregation.

Three of them followed and succeeded in career paths (nursing and skill trades) that highlight the hegemonic traits of perseverance and resilience they observed in their

parents, Deacon and Mary Drain. For example, my mother and aunt persevered in nursing school in spite of the many obstacles that their white instructors placed before them. They were nurtured in images of biblical characters they had heard all of their growing up lives; images which served as a source of strength in all their years since.

While my parents Lue Walter and Veola Stephens, as high school graduates, had no college experience, they did finish technical schools that lead to meaningful work and relatively high status jobs for that time, and within their community. For example, my mother attended and graduated from nursing school with an LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) certificate. My father completed a course in Real Estate, and was the only Black Real Estate Salesman in the Inkster, Michigan area for years. Both my parents placed a high value on education (an element of Black Hegemony) and communicated it to their four children through example.

It was during our growing-up years that they finished their high school diplomas and certificates of advanced education. They understood that education was "the" avenue for success in a society that was still basically segregated and discriminatory in practice. So they framed our successes by making sure we "always" attended school, monitored our homework, participated in leadership positions within the school such as president of the PTA at junior and senior high levels, and attendance at board of education meetings. Community involvement was evidenced in my father assuming leadership as president of the local community block club, and my parents' roles as den mother and father in Boy and Girl Scout groups. The church was yet another area of involvement. My parents were Sunday school teachers, and my father was Sunday school teacher and

superintendent. He was also a church deacon. My mother was also a missionary, youth director and a bible school leader. Finally, my parents are lifetime members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Throughout our elementary, middle school, secondary and post secondary years they provided the needed spiritual, psychological, community and financial support to help us succeed.

Each of my two brothers, sister (high-school valedictorian) and myself (with academic honors) completed high school and went on to complete some level of college work. My two brothers completed Associate degrees at local community colleges and entered the skilled trades. My sister and I received degrees from institutions of high repute (i.e., my sister from the Universities of Michigan and Wisconsin, and I from the Universities of California at Berkeley and Loyola University of Chicago) and are both currently working on doctorates.

I attribute my own personal school success to certain aspects of Black Hegemony. My grandfather and father's legacy of community activism, and the strength of parents who nurtured a sense of ethnic pride and positive self esteem in me are the most significant influences. I grew up on stories of my grandfather's examples (cited earlier) and father's political activities. My father fled the South because of the apartheid like conditions that existed in his growing up years. He recounted to his children numerous inequities that he felt were insufferable. For example, his inability to drink from the same water fountains as whites, and his inability to obtain jobs for which he was qualified (bakery chef). He left Alabama in protest. His leaving occurred during the early part of this century, a period of Great Migration for Blacks from the rural South. This move on the part of my father was

communicated to us (my parents' children) as one of great courage and foresight. It was a move that caused a great deal of sacrifice on both my parents part for it took quite a while for my father to establish himself with job and home, and then return for my mother and their three children (I wasn't born at the time). In spite of its hardship, my father's refusal to live and work under oppressive conditions set the tone for how I engaged and participated in my own world. I have a lifelong reputation among my former teachers, school friends and family as being outspoken: one who champions causes. During my elementary (second grade), middle (sixth - eighth) and high school (senior) years my parents were constantly at some school supporting my right to speak out. I was elected president of church and social clubs, all of which influenced my school and academic success. One of the comments contained in my High School yearbook is an example of hegemonic influences in my life. Sara said, "the thing I admire about you is your frankness in expressing yourself, no matter what others feel." While at the Erikson Institute of Advance Studies I was asked to deliver the graduation address because of my outspokenness and leadership abilities during the period of my studies there.

As we grew up in small town Inkster, Michigan, my father continued his political and community activism through relentless challenging of church and community leaders that appeared oppressive. For example, he challenged church ministers and administrators that failed to follow church policy. He held the reputation of being an outspoken individual, respectful, but fearless of authority. Church members and parents of School children often sought his council, and/or selected him to serve as community advocate to represent whatever the cause was at that time.

During our growing up years my mother told us stories of her school years. how she had attended an all black school with all black teachers. She instilled a sense of pride in black people by focusing on the all black curriculum she had experienced. She often recited the poetry of James Weldon Johnson, and spoke about the Black heroes she and her classmates had learned about (George Washington Carver, W.E.B. DuBois) in school. A positive image of African Americans emerged as she wove tales of her celebrated father and his civic and community activism throughout her school remembrances. My images of African Americans grew more complex throughout my growing up years. I learned that African Americans were actively involved in the struggle for freedom and liberation, constantly resisting the status quo, and resisting in myriad ways that eventually resulted in civic and social freedoms. My perspective on African Americas grew deeper and more full as I witnessed my mother's completion of her high school and technical school education while working, participating in a marriage and raising four children (only one year a part in age). I experienced my mother as a person with a great sense of ethnic pride. I experienced my mother as someone with great spiritual strength and perseverance, someone whose school success was filled with challenges, but not obstacles to her school success.

It is the remembrance of my father's and grandfather's community and political activism; it is the vivid images and experiences of my mother as a spiritual stalwart and advocate of ethnic pride that nurtured me and today, still undergirds my school successes.

Black Hegemony is a part of a legacy that has been passed down by my grandparents through my parents. The strong emphasis on spiritual values, community involvement,

civic participation and educational attainment are elements of Black Hegemony apparent in my family history and unquestionable contributors to our successes. It is also evidenced in generations of other high-achieving African Americans. Narrative stories like my own legacy lend powerful witness to Black Hegemony as a significant influence in academic achievement.

A legacy of Black Hegemony is evident in my family's personal history, having served as a form of cultural capital that sustained and enabled academic successes through generations. I believe that my personal history is not an anomaly. Rather, I propose that mine was a very standard experience for many high-achieving African Americans as evidenced in the narrative stories contained in the following literature review.

It is my contention that the cultural interests and hegemonic experiences of many African Americans are so pervasive that they warrant the social inquiry that frames my dissertation questions:

> How is it that Black Hegemony has enabled so many black children to matriculate through racist educational institutions, systems (e.g., segregated schools with inferior and dated books and instructional materials, low school funding) and practices (e.g., tracking) designed to disadvantage them?
>
> What aspects of Black Hegemony have had the greatest influence on the academic achievement of contemporary African-American achievers such as Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Clifton Taulbert, and Margaret Morgan Lawrence?

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The strengths and cultural capital resident within African Americans have been researched more fully by African-American scholars than other ethnic scholars. Their works examine the lives of African Americans in cultural, social and historical contexts allowing for the emergence of a general theory of African-American achievement. They also illuminate the "ever" resourceful Black grandmother, the "Vital Black church," the "Effective Black school," the "Committed Black teacher," the "hardworking," "Longsuffering Black masses," the "Upwardly Mobile sectors": all serve as important vehicles to a more in-depth understanding of the many and varied ways that Black Hegemony has influenced the academic achievement and school success of Historical and contemporary African-Americans. It is for these reasons that the works of African-American scholars dominate most of the literature that I have reviewed. Billingsley (1992), hooks (1996), and Ladson-Billings (1994) suggest that reform must come from within people themselves; that true reform must be based on strengths resident within a people (see also Freire, 1995). Their thesis provides for me a compelling argument and justification for my focus on the writings and research works of African-

Americans as well as a context in which to critically examine components of Black Hegemony as they relate to academic achievement and school success.

Underlying Assumptions and Theoretical Underpinnings

The writings of these authors contain six fundamental assumptions about academic achievement within the African-American community: 1) African Americans have a legacy of achievement that spans generations; 2) the majority of black people throughout American history have treated education as a holy grail . . . African-American parents believe that the lives of their children will improve with education; 3) African-American families are functional, not dysfunctional; their strengths are sufficiently powerful to be generative in the lives of their children; 4) there is a centrality of religion and spirituality in Black families and communities; and 5) there are psychological processes such as perseverance and resilience behaviors that influence achievement (see Figure 2-1). The educational attainment and school success of African American-youth are within the reach of contemporary society. These assumptions are inherent in the body of literature on academic achievement which frames my thesis.

Legacy of Academic Achievement

The first assumption: African Americans have a legacy of academic achievement that spans generations. The narrative works of Michelle Foster (1997), Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994), Dorothy Ehrhart-Morrison (1997) and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1997) include multi-age cohorts that span generations. Data contained in their collective works include

representatives that are of elder (ages range from approximately 70-90), veteran (ages range from approximately 55-69), and contemporary status (ages range from approximately 23-54). The case histories, personal stories contained within the authors' works provide real and authentic examples of this assumption.

In Foster's most recently published work, Black Teachers on Teaching, she chronicles the lives of a diverse (i.e., age, class, geography within the black community) number of African-American educators whose combined voices communicate decades of achievement and community activism. Elder Everett Dawson, graduated from North Carolina A&T in 1943. His memories serve as documentation of black teachers who were activists through their membership in the Black Association of the North Carolina Teachers Association. Dawson speaks of the organization's efforts to bring salary equity to Black teachers during the earliest decades of this century. Elder Ruby Middleton Forsythe, graduated in 1921 from Avery Institute, a Charleston Normal school for blacks. During her 60-year tenure as a school teacher she reports on one memorable event that made a lasting impression on her: black teachers, the principal and children organized a petition so that black teachers could work in Charleston. And finally, a contemporary teacher symbolizing the legacy of achievement spanning generations, Leonard Collins reports that, in his second year of teaching (1988), he volunteers at Imani School, an Afrocentric supplementary school three Saturdays a month. "At Imani I can be a proactive teacher rather than a reactionary teacher, as in public school" (p. 179). Lisa

Delpit remarks in her forwarding comments to Foster's book, "These teachers are committed to African-American children and their communities which spawn them: to believing in their unlimited potential, to working hard to provide a quality education despite difficult circumstances, to struggling against all forms of racial oppression, and to building a sense of connection between students and their communities" (p. xi). The collective history of each of these teachers leads me to several conclusions: 1) That academic achievement was not an anomaly or exceptional occurrence among African Americans; 2) that academic achievement occurred with such frequency to warrant the very existence of Black Professional associations; and 3) African American teachers were committed to the ongoing development and academic achievement of students under their tutelage.

The lives of thirty two-successful African-American women are contained in Dorothy Ehrhart-Morrison's (1997) book, No Mountain High Enough. "All of these women," she writes, "have worked hard in their lives to get to where they are now. All of them had the love and support of parents and grandparents who made even greater sacrifices, and beat even greater odds, in paving the way for their children. Again and again in these women's stories, you'll hear the theme of family values that fostered their self-esteem, ambition, honor, and a sense of responsibility. These women grew up believing that the sky was the limit, and as a consequence they have scaled great heights." (pp. 1-2) These women represent diversity in age and geography; they have a great deal to say about achievement,

about what it takes to achieve school success, to rise above the obstacles of race and sexism, to beat the odds, and to rise to the top. Their individual case stories and collective histories illuminate the underlying assumption that achievement is a legacy that spans generations.

Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Man, authored by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1997) brings the lives of accomplished African-American men to attention. The individual stories of such influential men as James Baldwin, Colin Powell, Harry Belafonte, and Albert Murray are narrated in such a way as to address their ascent and struggles within African-American and mainstream cultures.

Quotes from Hudson and Bates (1996) on "Passing the Torch" are relevant and apropos to the writings of Gates (ibid) and Ehrhart-Morrison (ibid): "As we learned from the elders that preceded us, today each of us has a responsibility to the next generation, and they to their successors." (p. 18) Lessons learned about survival in mainstream white society, and ways to overcome systemic discrimination are forms of cultural capital that constitute the black hegemonic experiences that influenced academic success.

Statistical data on the achievement gains of African Americans yield a profile that illustrates the assumption that African Americans have a legacy of academic achievement that spans generations. The American Council on Education's 15th Annual Status Report on Minorities in Education documents a 2.9% rise in the enrollment of minority students in higher education between 1994-1995. They also released data from a 1995 report that

establishes high school completion rates of African Americans as nearly equal to that of whites age 25 to 29.

	1985	1995
African Americans	81%	87%
Whites	87%	87%

Black Americans' incredible gains in education attest to the effectiveness of connected individual, family and community efforts. From 1940 to 1980 Black Americans doubled their median years of schooling from 6.2 to 12 years, virtually eradicating illiteracy. These figures provide further empirical data supporting the high value placed on education within the African American community, and the legacy of achievement that spans generations.

Andrew Billingsley's commentary (1992) about education and achievement in the African-American culture is summative in nature, providing further empirical evidence to support the narrative perspectives of Ehrhart-Morrison (1997) and Foster (1997). Billingsley states in his recent book, Climbing Jacob's Ladder (ibid), that "for more than a hundred years, each generation of blacks has been more educated than the one before." (p. 172). He provides statistical data on the increase in educational attainment in a number of key areas: basic literacy, school attendance, percentage completing high school and going on to graduate college and beyond. His research in this area provides empirical evidence of the increase in and high value African Americans have had for education as a vehicle for improving the lives of their children.

Education as the Holy Grail

The second underlying assumption emergent from the literature which supports my thesis on Black Hegemony is expressed in the eloquent words of Erhart-Morrison: "The majority of black people throughout American history have treated education as their holy grail . . . black parents have held tenaciously to the belief that the lives of their children can be improved by education." (p. 60) While this, is the primary theme of Ehrhart-Morrison's work she by no means is the only writer whose work addresses this assumption.

Bates & Hudson in their 1996 book titled, Basic Black: Home Training for Modern Times, provide more elaborated text about the primacy of education as a vehicle of achievement in the lives of black families. "Education has always been important to African Americans. When we were slaves, we risked death to learn to read and write. Later, as Freedmen, we made enormous sacrifices so our children would, with education, live better lives and help to uplift their burden. Being eager to learn, and serious about education, is as much a birthright for us as it is for any American. Revering education isn't "acting white" -- its acting smart." (p.19)

Empirical data that follows also lends a great deal of credence to the assumption that African-American families value achievement. The strong achievement orientation of low-income black families is described in the seminal work of Robert Hill (1971), The Strengths of Black Families. He cites a 1970 study which concluded that parents

influenced the college attendance of lower class black students more than that of middle class blacks and whites. Other studies cited include similar findings: the presence of strong achievement pressures on black students in "broken families" [sic] (Cosby, 1971); the dropout rate of white males in white colleges being higher that the dropout rates for black males in white colleges (American Council on Education, Office of Research, 1970); and the fact that three-fourths of the blacks enrolled in college come from homes in which the family heads had no college education (October 1970, Current Population Survey).

African-American Families are Functional, Not Dysfunctional

The third underlying assumption emergent from the literature on black achievement is: African-American families are functional, not dysfunctional. While families are both weak and strong, their strengths are sufficiently powerful and generative to make them viable forces in the lives of their children. Once again I make reference to Robert Hill's (1971) seminal work on the strengths of black families. In it he identifies five separate strengths from which one can collectively infer the functional nature of the black family: 1) Strong kinship bonds; 2) strong work orientation; 3) adaptability of family roles; 4) high achievement orientation; and 5) religious orientation. Hill acknowledges that these same strengths may be found in other families, but that they are manifested quite differently in black families because of the unique history of racial, social, economic and civil discrimination and oppression experienced by black families. It is this manifested uniqueness that I refer to as Black Hegemony, experiences that strongly influence the

school success of high achieving African Americans. Such experiences, as supported by the literature, include school achievement in spite of oppressive obstacles, and the pervasiveness of family and spiritual values that nurture the psychological processes of perseverance and resilience.

Billingsley's 1992 publication provides a contextual frame for my inquiry into Black Hegemony. His work on African-American family life and achievement is informed by sociology, history, and personal experiences as well. He argues that the resilience and resourcefulness of black families is a sustaining strength that has enabled its longevity and coherence. While he does not suggest that African-American families are not weak, he does argue that their strengths are exceedingly more powerful and generative. Billingsley's holistic perspective of the African-American family helps to frame the phenomenological nature of achievement in the African-American community.

Reginald Clark's book (1983), Family Life and School Achievement: Why Poor Black Children Succeed or Fail, is similar to Billingley's: it examines the phenomenon of achievement from a position of strength instead of the pathological approaches taken by a number of researchers. It is Clark's philosophy that family members' beliefs and values, their cultural style, and the overall quality of their interactions influence achievement. He stresses the point that it is not the family composition (e.g., single and two-parent family) or economic status that facilitates academic achievement. He further posits that these interactive behaviors constitute the "hidden curriculum" or the socialization process that

enables African-American children from low and middle income families to experience school success.

Clark does not focus on the socio-demographics (i.e., income, educational status) of families: they provide, he says, only a thumbnail sketch of the child's overall life style. Rather, he focuses on the psychological processes and patterns of the family. His perspective along with Billingsley's, Hill's and others' make viable the perspective that the strengths of African-American families are part of the hegemonic experiences that support and foster achievement.

I believe, based on a reading of the literature on the American-Black family, that strong values exist within and among among high-achieving Black families (two and single parent). Among other things they include strong kinship bonds, a strong achievement orientation, positive parent-child relations, and a strong religious orientation. My beliefs are consistent with those of Clark as well as other black scholars. Strong kinship ties are important among African-American families of today and yesteryear. In the recent past they have served as a major resource in struggles to survive and cope with the evils of racism, and legal and civil discrimination in the areas of housing, education and employment.

Excerpts from Marian Wright Edelman's (1992) writings provide poignant examples of these values and the very functional nature of African-American families. She begins her book, The Measure of Our Success (1992), with a salutation to family by stating, "I

am the aunt, granddaughter, daughter, and sister of Baptist ministers." (p. 3) (She goes on to provide fodder for Hill's (1971) theory on the religious orientation of African Americans: "The adults in our churches and community made children feel valued and important. They took time and paid attention to us . . . we always knew who we were and that the measure of our worth was inside our heads and hearts and not inside our possessions or on our backs. We were told that the world had a lot of problems; that Black people had an extra lot of problems, but that we were able and obligated to struggle and change them; that being poor was no excuse for not achieving." (p. 5) The achievement orientation, identified by Hill (ibid), is evident in this last passage. But, what is of striking importance to this author is Edelman's attempt to pass this very same legacy onto her three sons - in the 1990s. This contributes further weight to the thesis that black families are functional, generative and viable forces in the lives of their children, past and present. Edelman's testimony to her parents very sure presence in her life, and her attempts to pass this same legacy onto her sons makes plain the point.

This treatise to her sons symbolizes the passing of the torch that elders from previous generations of African-Americans have done in more informal ways. It represents my own growing up experiences as my mother gave her four children a steady diet of oral history about her parents, their struggles and achievements. It also represents the "good home training" generations of African-Americans have instilled in their children: fostering a sense of pride, heritage and empowerment about their lives.

The poetry of Mona Lake Jones (1993) is not biographical, but it portrays the ethos of the culture, its strength, beliefs, and ways of being in the world. The poem below captures the essence of the second half of this underlying assumption: their strengths are sufficiently powerful and generative to make them viable forces in the lives of their children. Threads of Black Hegemony and Robert Hill's strengths of the Black family are echoed throughout this poem.

BLACK CULTURE

One day I heard somebody say that Blacks were culturally deprived

And I wondered how they had arrived at that conclusion

I was confused by what they said

And it kept rumbling through my head

But it only took a while

Before I began to smile

You see I figured they simply didn't know

Black folks got sure 'nuff culture from our head down to our toe

It's the music that we sing and the style in which we talk

It's the preachin' and the prayin' [***religious orientation***] and even the way we walk

It's the get-down way we move when the band begins to play

And the looks we give each other without using words to say

M-m-m and M-m are some way we communicate

That folks outside our culture may not appreciate

It's how we put the man on and he doesn't even know

It's the way we keep on tryin' when someone tells us "no" [***perseverance, resilience***]

When they say we don't appreciate the finer things in life

I know, through all my education [***achievement orientation***], toil and strife

I recognize good music when I hear it on the air

And to say gospel, jazz and blues aren't culture isn't fair

With James Brown, my brother, you know I've got soul

And frankly, I often find string quartet performances rather cold

I surely recognize the finest there is in food

I don't even have to be in any special mood

To appreciate greens, black-eyed peas, cornbread and red Kool-aid

I'd turn down caviar no matter how much you paid

It's our Afros, curls and the way we do our hair

The clothes and the fashionable styles we wear

It's the sisters and brothers struggling for the cause

Fighting economics, politics, and unjust laws [***community activism***]

But most of all,

It's the way we hang together and the kinship [***strong kinship ties***] that we feel

That makes our culture so natural and real

When I think about our Blackness and what our culture is all about

It's hard to keep on talkin, 'cause I think I'm going to shout [***affective behaviors***]

"Black folks don't have culture, " I heard somebody say

And I just put my hand on my hip, rolled my eyes

and looked the other way.

Centrality of Religion and Spirituality

The fourth underlying assumption: The centrality of religion and spirituality is a central part of Black families and communities, and is evidenced throughout African-American literature. No study of African-American life would be complete without a focus on the Church; it has been, and remains today, an integral part of the African-American community. During the periods of slavery it was often the religious community that lifted flagging spirits that the slave master tried to crush daily. It also served as an ad hoc community center, dispensing advice, assistance, and even under the threat of death. Although it was illegal to teach slaves to read or write, black ministers often risked their lives to share their knowledge with congregants by teaching them simple reading and writing skills (Bates and Hudson, 1996).

Keith Osborne (1991) describes Sabbath schools as an educational facility for Blacks, established at the turn of the Nineteenth century. These schools were a critical part of the religious lives of many slaves. In addition to providing religious instruction, Church Sunday schools also provided training in literacy skills. A large segment of the slave

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population benefited, says Osborne, from this form of education through learning to read the Bible, reciting catechisms, and memorizing Bible verses.

In this century, Church played an important part in the Civil Rights movement. Activist ministers such as Martin Luther King, Jr., and Ralph Abernathy, were key in organizing black citizenry to press for their own civil freedom.

Today, write Bates and Hudson, our religious institutions, be they churches, synagogues, mosques, or temples remain at the center of many parts of our community. Social programs, day-care centers, forums for social activism and political debate, meals and shelter for the homeless, tutoring and mentoring programs for youth, scholarship programs, services for the elderly and poor, and missionary outreach are frequently administered by churches in black communities, and religious life remains an important part of whom African Americans are as a people.

Peter Paris (1995), a professor of social ethics at Princeton Theological Seminary, focuses on the "spirituality" - religious and moral values embodied in the African-American experience and framing the African-American perspective. He asserts that on of African values and religious practices have been retained. Traditional understandings of God, family belonging, and a focus on the value of reciprocity are addressed in his work, The Spirituality of African Peoples. His writing is a statement on the positive values of spiritual life and practices that sustained African-Americans through years of suppression, discrimination and now dismantling of legislative protections, civil rights policies and

practices so long denied.

Historian and educator, Larry Murphy, suggests in his 1993 work - Encyclopedia of African American Religions, that "most students of Black life have recognized the centrality of religion and historically in Black communities . . . A characterization of African Americans commonly offered by Black and White commentators, alike, is that they are 'a religious people' . . . religion's function of addressing issues of identity, security, and purposiveness has had a much more engaging pertinence for African Americans than for some other groups, given the nature of their historical status and their treatment in the American context . . . marginalized in social intercourse excluded by statue and common practice from participation in the privileges and institutional process of the nation . . . these challenges have been cast in the very serviceable categories of religion and addressed through the primary, sometimes sole agencies of advocacy at their disposal, namely, the churches and other religious institutions." (pp. xxxii - xxxiii)

The writings of Bates and Hudson, Osborne, Paris, Edelman, and Murphy, and the personal stories of Gates and Taulbert all legitimate the primary role religion have played in the lives of African Americans. Their inclusion in this dissertation expands the perspectives needed to present a holistic perspective needed on the vital components of Black Hegemony.

Resilience and Perseverance as Essential Aspects of Black Achievement

The fifth underlying assumption emergent from the literature on black achievement:

Psychological processes such as perseverance and resilience are an essential aspect of the growth and development of African-American children. The psychological components of Black Hegemony have been studied or cited by a number of social scientists and writers who write from positions of strengths versus a pathological perspective. Wilson-Sadberry et al. (1991), have researched dimensions of resilience and persistence in African-Americans. Wilson-Sadbury's research centers on males at the college or postsecondary level. Her work is important because it captures the strength of African-American males in an area of success, a role in which they have limited visibility. Because of this fact, her work is unique. Winfield (1991) has also researched dimensions of resilience and persistence in African-American youth. Her findings add psycho-social context, dimension and perspective to my research.

Ehrhart-Morrison's personal stories of 32 high achieving African-American women bear out the fifth underlying assumption of perseverance and resilience. She argues that they succeeded because of a number of conspiring factors: "There were no miracles involved: All of these women have worked hard in their lives to get to where they are now . . . ." (p. 1)

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune (in Ehrhart-Morrison, 1997) quotes Frederick Douglas in one of her addresses, in which he asked that Negroes not be judged by the heights to which they have risen, but by the depths from which they have climbed. My inclusion of this appeal is intentional for I feel that it captures the influences of Black Hegemony in a

few words. I submit that the heights to which high-achieving African Americans have climbed has been influenced and affected by the hegemonic experiences of their culture, by the perseverance and resilience fostered in them by their families and communities in spite of the systemic legal and social hindrances that blocked their every move.

Dual Challenges of Class and Racism

The sixth and final underlying assumption also emerges from the literature on black achievement: contemporary African-American families and their children are faced with the dual challenges of class, and the persistence of racism and how they struggle to overcome it. 1990 U.S. Census Data describes population and social trends among African-American families. Specifically, it documents migratory patterns of Blacks from rural to metropolitan and suburban communities. Some aspects of Billingsley's (1992) research is grounded in this empirical data, providing in-depth analysis of the statistics and their implications for families. For example, he discusses societal trends affecting African-American family structure, educational access, church and community life placing them in historical and contemporary context.

Tatum's (1987) publication, Assimilation Blues: Black Families in a White Community, establishes the fact that Black families are diverse in structure with growing numbers moving into middle-income and middle-class status. She provides a thorough analysis of issues facing middle-class Black families, and the challenges they face in socializing their children into integrated neighborhoods, schools and mainstream society. Issues of

isolation, upward mobility and changing social networks are also discussed. The research findings of others who have studied the Black middle-class such as Wilson (1978) and McAdoo (1979) are referenced in her text as she helps the reader understand the complex issues facing African-American families as they move, in increasing numbers, to integrated neighborhoods and suburbs.

K. Russell, M. Wilson, & R. Hall (1992) describe some of the perils middle-class African-Americans face around issues of class, identity, interracial marriage, parenting, and and issues of raising bi-racial/bi-cultural children such as issues of ethnicity, identify formation, and social isolation. The authors examine closely the challenges of class and race, and provide the reader with poignant insight into the complex issues that emerge from interracial families, and the possible implications for the academic success of their children. This research is relevant to the issue of achievement for it presents yet another complexity to our understanding of factors that influence achievement in African-American communities.

Janice Hale's (1991) article on The Transmission of Cultural Values to African-American Children suggests that the use of stories and African-American proverbs are useful in helping African-American children to understand their legacy of struggle and triumph. She provides prescriptive information on curriculum content and parental behaviors that could assist educators and parents in schooling and acculturation processes. Hale's work has a heuristic quality, providing instructional strategies that parents and

educators can employ in battling the persistence of racism that continues to challenge the school success of African-American children.

O'Connor (1997) and Perry (1996) focus our attention on the twin companions of perseverance and resilience. O'Connor's research on six African-American youth indicates that the resilience of these six contemporary-youth produced adaptive behaviors that assisted their school success in spite of their collective consciousness about African-American history and struggle. Perry's edited work, Teaching Malcolm X, provides an array of perspectives on the life and meaning of Malcolm X. The powerful theme that runs throughout the essays is how the twin companions of resilience and perseverance enabled Malcolm to struggle and assume control of his life. The essays provide clear examples of how contemporary teachers have integrated the experiential text of Malcolm's life into their curricula, and the many ways in which he affected their own personal and professional maturation. O'Connor's and Perry's works serve as a form of pedagogy that assists teachers in overcoming contemporary classism and racism.

Billingsley (1992) brings our attention to the dual role that African-American families must play in socializing their children into mainstream culture. He suggests that families must help their children develop a "double consciousness." They must assist them in their understanding of two cultures, African-American culture, and mainstream White culture. African-American children must come to understand the landscape of White culture and the inequities and racist policies that will deny them full access to American life, liberty

and the pursuit of happiness.

Banks (1996), who is a key figure in discussions of multicultural education, Delpit (1995) who speaks to the culture of power gained when African-American children learn under the watchful gaze of teachers with a socio versus an egocentric perspective, and hooks (1996) who talks about "engaged pedagogy" each address the topic of multicultural education in contemporary integrated societies. Their collective research provides possible paradigmatic and pedagogical solutions to the dilemma faced by African-American children as they attend integrated school systems.

Billingsley (1992) and Smith (in Billingsley) provide interesting responses to societal changes that have impacted the family, community, and educational access. They suggest that church and family partnerships can offer viable responses to changes that have impacted the family and school experiences of African Americans. The work of Murray Nettles looks to the community as a possible response to social, political and economic trends effecting African-Americans. Her findings reveal community characteristics that can mitigate the effects of school failure. Mentoring and advocacy are two such characteristics identified. A similar response to school achievement is found in the writings of Tatum (1997). She suggests that peer support groups, and adult mentorships can aid African-American youth as they deal with identity issues, racial encounters and other issues that affect school performance. The existence of these groups, she argues, can support and promote academic performance.

These six underlying assumptions emerged from the literature on black achievement and support my thesis that Black Hegemony is a socialization process that supports the academic achievement of high-achieving African-American students.

Chapter Three

Methodology

"Meaning Making," a search to understand people, events and actions within context is the primary thrust of the interpretive research paradigm. Interpretive research tends to lend voice and perspective to the issues, events, and circumstances of marginalized people. It offers a way to understand and to make sense of the legacy of academic achievement among African-American students despite the persistence of racism. I believe that academic achievement among African-American students needs to be understood within the dual context of mainstream society and its long history of civil, legal and social oppression and insistence on second-class citizenship for African Americans, and the beliefs, values, and traditions that have long been a part of the African-American family and community.

I also believe that interpretive research methodologies offer the most potent possibility of capturing the substance and fabric of the lives of African Americans and the complex constellation of beliefs, values, and traditions resident within African-American

communities. It is for these reasons that I selected it as the frame for understanding the people, relationships, events, and historical landscape of the lives of three African Americans that had experienced a high degree of academic success while matriculating through grades Kindergarten through High School in southern and segregated communities. Interpretive research lent voice and perspective to the academic lives of African Americans as represented through the lives of Clifton L. Taulbert, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Margaret Morgan Lawrence.

Ladson-Billings (1998) argues that voice, or the "experiential knowledge of African Americans, is a means to communicate the experience and realities of the oppressed . . . it is a first step in understanding the complexities of racism, and beginning a process of judicial redress." (p. 14) To this I would add, it is an initial step toward understanding the complexities of how it is that Black Hegemony has enabled so many Black children to matriculate through racist educational institutions, systems, and educational practices designed to disadvantage them.

Methodologies

There are several different types of interpretive research methodologies such as ethnographies, autobiographies and biographies, and case study narratives. My research is grounded in the genre of biographies as defined by Denzin (1989), who posits that the subject's life history is a vehicle for understanding educational theory (see Figure 3-1). If the educational community and power brokers who influence educational policy and

practice are to ever understand and appreciate African-American student achievement they must know more about their perspectives, what their experiences are, and what they believe and how they think. In short, knowledge of and familiarity with the culturally-influenced hegemonic experiences and cultural capital of African-American children is critical. Current efforts at improving educational practice will not be successful unless African-American experiences and perceptions are taken into account.

Research Design and Methodology

The biographical method of interpretive research is crucial to understanding the lives of these participants, and the research questions that frame this thesis:

How is it that Black Hegemony has enabled so many black children to matriculate through racist educational institutions, systems (e.g., segregated schools with inferior and dated books and instructional materials, low school funding) and practices (e.g., tracking) designed to disadvantage them?

What aspects of Black Hegemony have had the greatest influence on the academic achievement of contemporary African-American achievers such as Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Clifton Taulbert, and Margaret Morgan Lawrence?

These questions were best answered through the frame of interpretive research for it allowed access to the lived experiences, voice and perspectives of African-Americans who have succeeded in the academic arena. Their voice allowed me to examine the nuances of Black Hegemony (and perhaps, yield new conceptions of cultural hegemony). The vivid

words, the poignant and compelling stories of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence elaborated my thesis.

Biography in education has been defined as a "disciplined way of interpreting a person's thoughts and action in the life of his or her past", "the formative history of the individual's life experience." (Berk, 1980, p. 94) Cortazzi (1993) explains that Berk emphasizes how biography " . . . includes selections from a life, arranged and linked with respect to an outcome so that readers can make sense of the individual's experience and understand how that outcome came to pass." (p. 14) Denzin (1989) describes biographical method as "the studied use and collection of life documents which describe turning point moments in individual lives." (p. 13) It includes autobiographies, biographies, personal histories, letters, personal data, obituaries and oral histories. Biographical method was a critical process for interpreting the narrative data of this study. The goal in this research effort was to make sense of the thoughts, experiences, personal histories and turning point moments of African Americans who achieved in school during their growing up years (ages three to seventeen).

The biographical method of research allowed me intimate access to the personal life stories of African Americans with records of academic achievement. Stone (1981) suggests that biography and the collective study of lives can serve as insights into larger problems of social structure and social mobility. In studying the life stories of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence I was able to make connections, networks and possible

linkages which created a conceptual framework for understanding school success among African Americans. Biography, says Smith (1994), should move beyond narration and storytelling of the particular into more abstract conceptualizations, interpretations and explanations. Chapters Four through Six of this dissertation focus on narration and storytelling, while Chapters Seven and Eight focus on interpretations, explanations and implications.

This method of research was designed around what Denzin (1989) viewed as the conventions of the biographic method: existence of others, family beginnings, starting point, turning point experiences (epiphanies), and life markers. The biographic method allowed me great access to the conflicts embedded within Drs. Gates and Lawrences' stories. Dr. Gates' struggle to find an affinity with his father, and Dr. Lawrence's struggle to gain emotional access to her mother were examined through this method. A close look at these conflicts as important variables, and as manifestations of Black Hegemony lent itself to a comprehensive critical examination of their lives. The "other" was explored through this method of inquiry -- C. Taulbert and Dr. Gates devoted considerable portions of their autobiographies to people and communities that, from their perspectives, made significant impact in their lives. The biographical method provided the context for these types of examination.

The biographical literature of African Americans is immense and growing (Smith, p. 300), providing a plethora of research data. This rich array of biographies such as Henry

Louis Gates, Jr., Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot, Malcolm X, Maya Angelou, John H. Johnson, Colin Powell provide a rich tapestry of data, multiple dimensions of the black experience, and diverse perspectives from which to construct meaning. Collectively, these biographies illuminate historical events, experiences, and perspective so as to aid and inspire educators (including myself) in imagining possibilities for educational models and practice.

Data Collection

I focused my study on the lives of three individuals as revealed through their biographies and writings: Clifton L. Taulbert, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Margaret Morgan Lawrence. Their biographies were selected for three primary reasons: 1) Each of the biographies focuses on early school experiences and the growing up years - preschool through early adulthood; 2) these biographies are replete with examples of resources or cultural capital that influenced achievement; and 3) the influential adults in their young lives who served as community activists (of one sort or another), child advocates, educational interventionists (at home and in the school setting), and visionaries (families who both explored new opportunities and/or supported their children's dreams and pursuit of new opportunities). I believe that the in-depth study of the collective three was more important than focusing in on the life of eight to ten.

Gates, Taulbert, and Morgan-Lawrence lived storied lives, rich with examples of familial behaviors, attitudes and general resources that served as effective interventions to educational systems designed to discourage and disadvantage them. Collectively, their

stories represented, for me, a culture of power that was worthy of examination and reflection for its possible educational implications, whatever they might be. As anticipated a number of conceptions for parental interactions and educational practice emerged.

Their biographies were also selected for the historical period in which they grew up, periods prior to the advent of school desegregation and passage of Civil Rights Legislation. It was a period in which African-Americans were treated as second-class citizens which restricted their access to schools of choice, learning materials, and in general "equal" educational opportunities. This historical backdrop provided an opportunity for me to obtain a clearer understanding of which factors influenced the participants' academic achievement. I reasoned that supports for their educational attainment and school success were not forthcoming from mainstream society, consequently they must have emerged from the African-American community.

Each of these research participants spent their growing-up years in small segregated-southern communities where educational resources were scarce, and educational opportunities limited. However, Drs. Gates and Lawrence, and C. Taulbert were able to successfully matriculate through school, graduating with honors, in spite of the many social, civil and institutional barriers that were constructed to thwart and discourage their success. I suggest that the high levels of academic performance and school success demonstrated by these three individuals results, in large measure, from the mutual interplay between their innate intelligence and components of Black Hegemony. It is my

theory that these factors were correlational, influencing the academic success of these three individuals.

Mastery-oriented attributes characterized the behaviors of each research participant: Gates, Taulbert, and Morgan-Lawrence. Their narratives indicate that each of them was recognized early on for their intellectual and cognitive abilities. Their stories indicate that each had knowledge of their special intellectual abilities, recognized, reinforced and advanced by their nuclear and extended families, and the communities in which they lived. Each built on this knowledge and used it to help them face the challenges of segregated school and community life, racism, and in general, a nation that discouraged their school success. The biographies of these three individuals conveyed images of three intellectually competent individuals whose attributes served as an important factor in meeting the challenges of institutional and societal racism.

The personal voice and experiential knowledge of each individual biography comes through loud and clear on influences that advanced their academic success. Taulbert's and Gates' works are autobiographical, and Margaret Morgan Lawrence's is somewhat autobiographical in the sense that it is based on personal interviews conducted by her daughter, noted educator and sociologist, Dr. Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot. Each of these African Americans dealt with civil and social discrimination, segregated schooling, and educational policies that threatened to deny them educational opportunity and access. Nevertheless, they managed to perform well in school.

In addition, their biographies provided rich sources of description for the elements of Black Hegemony. For example, belief in education as "the" way to-make-it was a common belief and theme that ran throughout each of the participants' home life and throughout their growing up years. Respect for family and spiritual traditions were also essential features of their home life. These dimensions of Black Hegemony were clearly portrayed in the day-to-day existence of lives and as such provided rich contextual data for study.

The voice and perspectives of those studied is not representation of the lives of all African Americans, but they are critical to the "Lebenswelt" of this study

Forms of Data Analysis

Several frameworks were used for qualitative analysis in this study: Labov's Evaluation Model, multifaceted dimensions of Black Hegemony, and Interpretivism (see Figure 3-2). Application of these three frameworks resulted in an in-depth and comprehensive analysis broad in nature and scop, including the analytic processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

Before moving to a description of the data analysis, a discussion of the variation in writing styles of the research participants is in order. It seems appropriate to make comment at this juncture for it provides a context for understanding the data to be analyzed. The writing styles and interpretive focus of each biographer was quite different and as a consequence so was the nature of the data that emerged (see Figure 3-3).

Dr. Gates, at the time of this writing, is Professor of English and Chairman of Afro-American Studies at Harvard University. He is the author and editor of numerous publications. This study is focused on his 1994 autobiography, Colored People. It is a fascinating memoir of his early years and the significant persons (nuclear and extended family members) who influenced his childhood, and academic achievements. His writing is a reflective piece that critically, though gently and respectfully, examines the dynamics of interpersonal family and community relationships in the context of history, geography and culture. Gates' portrayal of his life is more straightforward and factual. It is rich with detail, explanatory vignettes and even humor allowing the reader to get at the minutiae of his existence. This attention to detail provided a window into the areas of complication in his life. They introduced Complication and Resolution as areas of narrative structure. While there was some data in this regard in Taulbert's life it was more difficult to ascertain than that of Gates.

Clifton Taulbert, at the time of this writing, is an internationally known speaker, and President of the Freemount Marketing Company of Tulsa, Oklahoma. He has authored a number of well-known books, his autobiographies, When We Were Colored, and Watching Our Crops Come In among them. I focused my energies on the evaluation of these two biographical memoirs with special attention given to his perceptions of the relationships that nurtured his success. His writings are idyllic and romanticized, written in a beautiful prose format that leaves the reader with the sense that Taulbert has

somehow romanticized the people and experiences of his youth at the expense of truth. While his writings appear less critical and psychoanalytic as in the writings of Dr. Morgan Lawrence, they are, nevertheless, a legitimate source for qualitative research for they focus on the emic nature of his life. They tell of myriad aspects of Black Hegemony that influenced and nurtured his academic success. It is this fact, alone, that supports the inclusion of Taulbert's autobiography for study and examination.

And finally Dr. Morgan Lawrence, who was the mother of noted-author and sociologist, Dr. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot. Dr. Lawrence graduated from medical school at Columbia and became, a psychoanalyst and child psychiatrist. Her personal history as related to her daughter emerged from a psychoanalytic perspective. Consequently, they are very clinical in nature. As Sara interviewed her mother over a year-long period she was able to dig deep into the recesses of her mother's clinically-trained mind. Her writings reflect a psychiatric-deconstruction of her mother's youth.

The writing styles of the three authors vary, considerably. However, they each present the unique voice and perspectives of individual lives that were positively influenced and affected by varying aspects of Black Hegemony. These writings, though varied in style, provided the source of data for study and analysis.

Labov's (1972, p. 363) Evaluation Model was used to analyze the biographical data of each of the three biographers, and to understand each of their interpretive perspectives and experiential knowledge and the many and varied factors that influenced their school

achievement.

Labov's Evaluation Model is widely used and applied in literary/narrative analysis (Platt, 1977; Carter and Simpson, 1982; Maclean, 1988). Cortazzi argues that "Its primary function is to communicate to the audience the meaning of the narrative by establishing some points of personal involvement. This is what makes the narrated events reportable and 'without the concept of reportability we cannot begin to understand the things that people do in telling narratives." (Labov et al. 1968, p. 30) This function is a crucial element of narrative, so much so that the model will be termed hereafter the 'Evaluation Model' to draw attention to the way tellers give their perspectives on the narrative content by evaluating the meaning it has for them. "Evaluation is a natural, even unconscious, part of narration." (p. 44)

The Evaluation Model draws attention to the biographer's voice and perspective, which is important to interpretive research, and crucial to understanding the phenomenological perspective of African Americans. Application of this model gave me partial access to the muted voices of African Americans as represented through the experiences of my research participants: Clifton L. Taulbert, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Margaret Morgan Lawrence. While their experiences are not necessarily generalizable to the larger African-American population, they do provide some measure of perspective into the forces that influence academic achievements, serving as possible models for curriculum content and construction.

Labov's Evaluation Model provided a vehicle through which I could get at the voice and experiential knowledge of Drs. Gates and Morgan Lawrence, and C. Taulbert. Application of the model was an important initial and critical step toward understanding the complexities of how it is that Black Hegemony has enabled so many children to matriculate through racist educational institutions, systems, and educational practices designed to disadvantage them.

Through this model I initially analyzed each biography according to the following structures: Abstract (book summary), Orientation (sequence of events), Resolution (outcome of narrative conflict), Coda (close of narrative), Evaluation (story's meaning, biographer's perspective and attitude), and Complication (conflicts, tensions). After the initial reading of each biography I wrote the equivalent of field notes. These notes served as a form of data reduction as I wrote summaries, teased out themes, and clustered information as it emerged from the text. Charts and matrices were then generated to display information for comparison and analysis; this made the information more easily accessible for me.

The second analytic framework to data analysis was the multifaceted dimensions of Black Hegemony with special attention given to the Complication and Evaluation components of Labov's Evaluation Model (Black Hegemony). Much of the data analysis lay within the components of Complication and Evaluation. It was within these structures that much of the biographers' interpretive voice and perspective lay. The Evaluation

structure was the point at which Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence interrupted their stories to share their experiential knowledge and to inform me, in this case, their audience, of their personal interpretations and perspectives on the "complexities and realities" of their lives. It was at this point that the influence of Black Hegemony was revealed.

Specific events and quotations were recorded in written form serving as a form of field notes and a source of data reduction. By repeatedly reviewing notes I came to an increased understanding of the phenomenological nature of their experiences and perspectives, but also gained some insight into some of the contributing influences to school achievement. Throughout these two analytic frameworks I was interpreting and drawing initial conclusions through common themes, patterns and propositions.

And finally, Interpretivism, the third framework used by this researcher, was used to provide further insight and context to the data already collected. I intentionally selected Interpretivism because it allowed me access to multiple voices. It was important for me to listen to and understand the voices of high achievers, but also to have license to use my own voice, and the voices of educational and sociological researchers who have studied educational achievement in African-American students from a position of strength. The voice of educational and sociological researchers such as Billingsley (1992), Ladson-Billings (1994 and 1998), O'Connor (1997) provided additional context for understanding and interpreting the experiential knowledge and interpretive perspectives of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence. I felt, strongly, that the use of these three modes of

analysis would triangulate my data, serving as a heuristic tool in my efforts to understand how Black Hegemony influenced school achievement.

And finally, throughout this framework I was interpreting and drawing initial conclusions through observation of common themes, patterns, and propositions. Next, each participant in their respective chapters (Taulbert-Chapter Four, Gates-Chapter Five, and Morgan Lawrence-Chapter Six) was examined in the context of educational, sociological and developmental research which provided context for and verification of many of my initial conclusions. Chapter Seven compared the data of Chapters Four through seven, providing a broader base for arriving at final conclusions contained in Chapter Eight.

Conclusion

The value and process of understanding the lived-experiences of African Americans and the emic nature of their perspectives on factors that influenced their success is consistent within an interpretive philosophy and approach.

Lincoln and Guba (1994) suggests that one of the properties of interpretive research is interpreting meaning. Understanding the context of academic achievement among African-American students and the forces that influenced it was the essence of this research effort, and was consistent with the guiding theory of interpretive research - interest in the lives and perspectives of people in societies who have had little or no voice. An examination of the data collected through the biographical method lent contemporary

voice to the historical perspectives already written by African-American writers, researchers and educators. And, it allowed me to "tell the history," and pass on the legacy of academic achievement among African Americans.

Chapter 4
Clifton L. Taulbert

High-school Valedictorian, college graduate, banker, entrepreneur, motivational speaker - Clifton L. Taulbert (Taulbert) - is an accomplished African American. His many and varied accomplishments are measurable outcomes of the dynamic interplay between individual ability, family, community and cultural influences. Powerful black hegemonic influences, such as a belief in "education as 'the' way-to- make it," "legacy of achievement," and a "spiritual belief in God," resided in the hearts, minds and behaviors of Black folk in the rural-segregated southern town of Glen Allan, Mississippi. They significantly influenced the many and varied academic and school successes of young Taulbert.

A large body of research on school achievement has developed over the last three decades. African-Americans (e.g., Billingsley, 1992; Clark, 1983; Clark & Scott-Jones, 1986; Hill, 1971; Lee et. al., 1991; Marsh, 1990) conducting research in this area have focused on key variables such as the influences of families, community, motivation and student attitude. I focused my study on the constellation of dimensions comprising Black

Hegemony as opposed to the single variables identified by researchers mentioned earlier in this study. My principle inquiry will be: How did he, Clifton Taulbert, manage to matriculate through segregated educational institutions designed to discourage and disadvantage him? "Strong Family and Kinship ties" and "High-Achievement Orientation" are two of five strengths of black families identified in Hill's (1971) and Billingley's (1992) research findings. They are also two key components of Black Hegemony: family, and an emphasis on education as a way to make it. Components of Black Hegemony and the research works of Hill and Billingsley are found spewing forth in the pages and cameos of Taulbert's life story. For example, the recurrent theme of Taulbert's three volume autobiography (When We Were Colored, The Last Train North, and Watching Our Crops Come In) is the "pursuit of an education beyond the walls of Glen Allan and the considerable role family and community played in affecting it." As Taulbert weaves the narrative he communicates to the reader over and over again the notion that family (including extended family members) influenced, inspired and "infused my hopes" with a strong sense of achievement. An abiding love for family and their tenacious resolve for him and other children to "get an education" are conveyed in the lines of Taulbert's life story. Through cameos of family and extended family members he etches out the drama of his life, making plain for readers that he attributes his academic and school successes to his "colored Glen Allan" family and community.

Poppa - Elder Young (Poppa), Ma Pearl, Ma Ponk, Mr. Louis Fields, Mama, Cousin Lulu and Uncle Cleve are the family (colored people) members cited by Taulbert, and the primary vehicle through which black hegemonic influences such as family values;

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community values, and a belief in God were conveyed. Other important persons identified by Taulbert includes religious matriarch and educator Mother Luella Byrd, and school personnel, Miss Ross and Miss Maxey. The impact of their collective belief in education as a way-to-make-it, spiritual behaviors and practices such as parental involvement, coupled with his own innate intelligence, created in him a strong sense of self that manifested itself in high levels of industriousness (e.g., working while in school), confidence (e.g., first black to apply and obtain a job as store clerk), and cognitive competence (e.g., by 8th grade Taulbert knew he wanted to be somebody, everyone told him he was special, and high school Valedictorian). The overall quality of family and community interactions greatly influenced his academic successes. Though Taulbert grew up in Glen Allan during a period of racial, civil and social segregation (late 1940s - mid-1960s), where schools were separate and unequal, and opportunities for economic and social advancement were grossly limited for "coloreds," the efficacious and dominant influences of Black Hegemony prevailed, resulting in Taulbert's valedictorian status and eventual college completion.

Poppa and Ma Pearl, Taulbert's great-grandparents established the standards for school success, standards that would have long-term impact upon his life. With a great deal of courage and foresight "they ignored the restrictions of legal segregation" and dreamed of college for their children and grandchildren. These dreams shaped young Taulbert's youth, making it possible for him to overcome the impact of underfunded and ill-equipped schools. Poppa, a literate man, respected clergy and community spokesperson, Poppa emphasized the importance of education as a way-to-make-it.

Taulbert spent a good deal of his growing-up years in the company of Poppa, who directly and vicariously, provided a psychological disposition toward learning, achievement and eventual school success. Taulbert was encouraged to work hard, study long and to focus his sights beyond the Mississippi. Soon most Saturdays he would accompany Poppa in his '49 Buick on drives to Greenville, Mississippi. Poppa would share his "pearls of wisdom" along the way. A clear and strong message that "getting an education was a priority" was conveyed. Poppa's status as a respected Black was interpreted by young Taulbert as a concrete and tangible example; after all, he concluded, "Poppa-Elder Young- was a well-known Baptist preacher." As he and Clifton slowly wound their way through the countryside young Clifton was introduced to any number of positive influences that conveyed similar messages. For example, Taulbert tells of his "unofficial godparent," Mr. Louis Fields. Taulbert remembers Fields stressing the importance of an education. "Go all the way boy, study hard, learn to draw buildings, be a doctor, do good in school, ain't nothin to field work." (Taulbert, 1989, p. 14)

As Taulbert reflects on his Saturday morning breakfasts with Mr. Fields he describes many of the parental behaviors that researcher, Reginald Clark (1983) attributes to high academic achievement such as parental involvement, support network, and communication. Not only was he the best of listeners, but Miss Sarah was a wonderful cook . . . On those days that I ate with the Fields, I loved visiting and sitting on the big back porch while Miss Sarah cooked. I answered Mr. Louis' [Fields] questions about what I wanted to be when I grew up . . . we'd shoo flies and talk as we ate. Mr. Louis [Fields] would tell me I could be anything I wanted to be . . . He talked, I ate, he

talked, I listened . . . he always inquired about my progress in school (Taulbert, 1989, p. 14). While the encounters were informal, they were non-the-less important. The types of interactions that Taulbert experienced with Poppa and Mr. Fields are the types of behaviors that Clark suggests determines high achievement and school success. Clark's findings suggest that it is the "interpersonal dynamics" of family life and the overall quality of the family's life style that determines whether children are prepared for academic performance in the classroom, not family size, social status, parental income or marital background. He maintains that parents' dispositions, and the interpersonal relationships fostered with the child in the household, in the community and within support networks is the family's primary contribution to a child's success in school. These interpersonal relationships (i.e., home, extended family) form a type of social network that helps to socialize the child into successful school performance. Reflections of these types of relationships are sketched on the pages of Taulbert's biography. They were an essential part of his growing up years and served to mitigate the negative experiences of growing up in the restrictive and limited era of Jim Crow.

Poppa and Mr. Fields' interactions with Taulbert impacted him in two very significant ways: 1) they engaged him in explicit literacy nurturing activities, and 2) created an emotional climate for learning. Poppa's weekly "pearls of wisdom" shared on their long-winding drives through the countryside on their way to Greenville, served as a sort of "hidden curriculum" (Beane, 1990) providing numerous opportunities for interactive communication, feedback and reinforcement of concepts learned. Taulbert reports that Poppa was his "best friend," and that his relationship grew over the years, implying a

strong emotional bond and affective connection. Frequent parent-child dialogue is one of the common behavioral patterns found among students who are high achievers (Clark, 1983), it is one of the influential and determining behaviors that was present in Taulbert's growing-up years.

Mr. Louis Fields contributed significantly to promoting the "hidden curriculum," and establishing an emotional climate and proclivity toward learning. His treatise to "study hard . . . go all the way" helped to create the notion that there were more career options than field work, the "predominant one" available to "coloreds" in Glen Allan. Field's conversations with Taulbert, his inquiries about Taulbert's school progress, his high expectations and constant urging to explore other career options, inspired a mind set and requisite mental structures that assisted Taulbert in envisioning new possibilities, new options: "learn to draw buildings, be a doctor ain't nothing to field work" (ibid, p. 14) never before thought possible for young black boys and girls. Poppa helped to create a support network for Taulbert's school success, by exposing him to progressive thinkers and mentors like Mr. Fields and others.

Mentor relationships have a historical legacy within the African-American community as reflected in Bates and Hudson's (1996) book Basic Black: Basic Home Training for Modern Times, and Marian Wright Edelman's (1992) comments, "Many of my mentors and role models . . . all conveyed the same message as they spoke in Sisters Chapel at Spelman: education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it. Other important influences during my Spelman years - Ella Baker, Samuel Dubois Cook, Septima Clark, Howard Zinn, Charles E. Merrill, Jr. -

- stretched my vision of the future and of one person's ability to help shape it." (p. 10) Young Taulbert's relationship with Mr. Fields seem to serve similar purposes; he helped to stretch Taulbert's vision of the future, to dream dreams, to imagine possibilities. And imagine the possibilities he did. "My dreams and ambitions stretched far beyond the resources of a small southern town." (p. 151)

Taulbert had received constant and consistent feedback from his nuclear and extended family; feedback that led him to the following conclusion: "I knew I was as smart and capable as the whites." (p. 152) This positive sense of self-esteem would be instrumental in helping him succeed in school. Researchers have found a strong correlation between positive self-esteem and school achievement (Marsh, Smith & Barnes, 1985). Self-esteem has been proven to be a sound predictor of children's school achievement and their willingness to attempt challenging tasks. Taulbert's sense of self esteem was bolstered by his longstanding friendship and interactions with Poppa and Mr. Fields. Taulbert's positive sense of self-esteem served as a foundational variable in his school success, and has subsequently manifested itself in many ways: his successful efforts to try out and get a job that no other colored person had before (store clerk in the Hilton grocery store); his successful appointment to officer's status (sergeant) in the military and related challenging assignments (learning computer technology), and his current professional involvement as a motivational speaker.

Ma Ponk, great-aunt and extended family member, was a central member of the support network that grew and nurtured Taulbert's school achievements. Her influence was vast, enduring through his growing up and adult years as well. During his first five

years of life Taulbert lived with Poppa and Ma Pearl. However, Ma Pearl's failing health required that they seek out an alternative home environment that was nurturing and caring; Ma Ponk's was it. The intentional selection of her home allowed Poppa and Ma Pearl to focus on the priority of my education, even in the face of adversity

Taulbert's life, values and motivations were positively affected by Ma Ponk. He concludes with evaluative comment that Ma Ponk "profoundly affected the lives of those of us who were blessed to have passed her way." (p. 143) The following reflections support his conclusion " . . She taught me how to work, and how to survive in our colored environment. But, she has also shown me the value of an education . . Poppa and Ma Ponk had caught my attention early and had impressed upon me the responsibility I had to them and the family who had gone before me." (p. 143) Once again, we learn through Taulbert's analysis about his support network and how they helped to mitigate the restrictive Jim Crow laws, and negative messages about the inferior status of coloreds.

Creativity, making a way-out-of-no way is a dimension of Black Hegemony. Elements of it are found in Taulbert's growing up experiences. For example, Young Taulbert was grateful that Ma Ponk had graciously allowed him to live with her upon Ma Pearl's illness. Also, he remembers the many sacrifices Ma Ponk made on behalf of her son who reportedly had "returned from the war, entered college and later received his doctorate. She could not change her lot in life, but she was profoundly affecting the lives of those of us who were blessed to have passed her way." (p. 143) This creativity and resourcefulness are similar to Clark's (1983) research findings. One of the common patterns identified in his research on family life and academic achievement among African

Americans is financial and social sacrifice for the sake of children's scholastic progress. Patterns of sacrifice were evident in this and other familial relationships that composed the community and social network that facilitated Taulbert's academic success. His relationship with his biological mother, Mary Morgan Taulbert (Ma Mary) is one such example.

Ma Mary was herself an active member of young Taulbert's support network. Though he did not live with her - a major sacrifice on his mother's part-- she was both physically and emotionally accessible, living within walking distance of Poppa's house. Taulbert reports, "My mother was unmarried and just out of high school when I came into this world, and when she later married, it was felt that I would be better off living with Poppa and his wife, Ma Pearl." (p. 10) Ma Mary, in conjunction with Poppa and Ma Pearl, "used her ingenuity and drive to create visions of excellence." She was a celebrated high school graduate with some college experience, who was deemed qualified to teach - no small feat for small time rural Glen Allan, and as such was a respected community member. Though he did not live with her, he learned from and was greatly influenced by her. Before age five, Taulbert accompanied his mother to Peru school, a plantation school for "colored," where she taught all eight grades. The "underfunded, ill-equipped and overlooked school" was located in a church, like many black schools were during this period of America's Jim Crow history, the Pre-Civil Rights era. Taulbert remembers clearly his mother's commitment and dedication to seek creative ways to solicit the involvement of parents. She seemed to understand, as Clark's (1983) research findings bear out, that parent involvement is a critical aspect of children's school success. So

employing the black-hegemonic trait of, "making a way-out-of-no-way," she engaged parents' energies and resources to prepare lunches for the children. It was extraordinary because parents worked as field hands. obtaining release time from their labors was no easy feat for his mother. During this historical period of African-American history, a black person had to be creative, persuasive and extraordinarily crafty to obtain such permission. Taulbert offers another explicit example of her creative abilities; it includes the conversion of the church alter into the Bethlehem scene for their annual Christmas pageant: I always enjoyed watching my mother take the ordinary and make it something special. For instance, Mama would get all the farm families involved in creating the annual Peru School Christmas pageant. One year, with the help of a few faithful parents, Mama turned the altar area of the church into Bethlehem. Mama Dried cotton stalks became the stubble for the manger floor and hand-cut logs made up the exposed beams that framed the stable. Sheets and multicolored quilts formed the walls of a Jewish inn, and the children of tired field hands became angels, shepherds and kings." (p.27) With few resources and a lot of imagination, Taulbert witnessed his mother create a way out-of-no-way. His mother's efforts seem triumphant given the meager conditions of the school, materials and impoverished learning environment in which she had to work. Perhaps, some might interpret his mother's efforts as a "remarkable" response to a difficult situation. However, interpret it as a viable response to my query - - How is it that young Taulbert was able to matriculate through schools designed to discourage and disadvantage him? The ability to dream and envision a future in spite of life's hardships is a hegemonic response typical of many African Americans. The difficult living conditions and meager resources of his

family and community were viewed by Taulbert as life's, not as obstacles.

Cousin Lulu, an extended family member was not an active member of the support network. However, her actions provided an extension of the message he was receiving from Poppa and Ma Pearl, Ma Ponk, Mr. Fields and Ma Mary. Cousin Lulu's actions helped to crystallize in Taulbert's mind the high value those family members placed on education, leaving a lasting impression upon him. He witnessed cousin Lulu make major financial and social sacrifices in order for her daughter, Bernice, to move from the country and the familiar and comfortable surroundings of her family to Glen Allan for the sole purpose of completing the eighth grade. Cousin Lulu incurred housing and related-living expenses to purchase a place for Bernice and her Glen Allan guardian (Tee) to live in. Taulbert's inclusion of this remembrance is significant, for it remains an indelible memory about the value and importance family members placed on education, and the great lengths and sacrifices they were willing to make so that their children could get ahead. It also helps to interpret for the reader the value that his extended family placed on education. A strong emphasis on "education as the way-to-make-it" was communicated to young Taulbert; he came to understand that sacrifice was what parents and family did to make their dreams a reality. Taulbert's reflections are evaluative in nature and as such serve as a form of retrospective analysis of the forces that influenced his academic life.

Key family members and their dynamic interactions with Taulbert conveyed consistent and powerful messages that "education was the way-to-make it." They also communicated high expectations of him and their belief in his abilities to achieve. Taulbert says, "I knew I was as smart and capable as the whites." However, researchers' Clark

and Scott-Jones (1986) suggest that academic achievement is dependent on more than individual abilities; their findings indicate that the social environment in which learning takes place can also enhance the behaviors that result in achievement. Collectively, Poppa and Ma Pearl, Ma Ponk, Mama Mary, Mr. Fields and Cousin Lulu provided the requisite social and psychological environments, sufficient parent-child interactions and literacy-type behaviors (i.e., communication and conversations with Poppa, Mr. Fields, Mr. Cleve; observing and indirectly benefitting from his mother's classroom instruction prior to entering school) to prepare young Taulbert for the many academic and school successes that he experienced. They fostered a sense of hope and entitlement to mainstream American life and schooling. Taulbert interprets and evaluates, well, the actions of his family in his reflections about his school experiences in 'separate but unequal' school environments that were under funded and ill-equipped. In spite of his family's awareness of this dilemma they still expected that he and his friends would take advantage of all opportunities, and go as far as they could.

Researchers have discovered that individual attitudes toward school are a contributing factor in the equation that results in high levels of school performance and success. They have learned through a number of studies (Lee et al., 1991; Trotter, 1981; Wilson-Sadberry, Winfield, & Royster, 1991) that there are differences in attitudes among high-achieving and low-achieving students. Their findings indicate that high-achieving students have more positive attitudes toward school than low-achieving students. Taulbert's immediate and extended family members communicated to him positive attitudes about school (e.g., "the vehicle that would make our lives better"), its benefits to his personal

development (e.g., "I couldn't forget the advice I'd heard over and over from Uncle Cleve and Mrs. Knight and others about getting an education and bettering myself. I couldn't forget the ambitions my teachers had for me . . " (p.152), and its benefits for the colored race. His academic achievements - high school Valedictorian, high school and college graduations, were most likely influenced by the positive attitudes nurtured in him by his family.

Lee et al., (1991) suggest that achievement influences self-efficacy and self-concept, which in turn promotes coping mechanisms such as resilience and perseverance which affect achievement among high-achieving youth. Resilience and perseverance, both dimensions of Black Hegemony, are certainly evident in Taulbert's life. By the time he had finished eighth grade, Taulbert reports that he knew he wanted to be somebody. He was motivated to the point that he made a daily journey to a colored-high school far away from his home. He developed a sense of perseverance and resilience that enabled his successful high school completion. O'Bannon High, was the colored high school that Taulbert attended - traveling, daily, more than 100 miles round trip, by county school bus, from his house even though the closest high school, a white high school, was only blocks from where he lived.

Another example of the growing self-efficacy and self-concept emerging in young Taulbert includes a friendship that he attempted to create with two white boys at the Hilton grocery store. The segregated town of Glen Allan did not encourage race mixing of any type, including boyhood friendships. However, Taulbert's confidence in obtaining the first colored position at Hilton's grocery store seemed to encourage risky behavior.

He conversed with his "almost friends" on several occasions becoming much too chummy with them much to the chagrin of his white employer. Taulbert exhibited a sense of resilience and perseverance when losing the "almost" friendship. Socializing with whites was a social taboo. When his white boss discovered the friendship, he reminded young Taulbert of his place, he was colored, and the other boys were white. Taulbert's interaction with them for purposes other than service to them was breaking one of the social mores of their segregated society. His attempts at socializing with the white boys ended on that day. In spite of this unfortunate encounter Taulbert remained in a work environment that permitted no race mixing. He continued to work in a psychological atmosphere that said coloreds weren't good enough, that they were inferior.

But, he persevered in spite of the psychological insults, and negative assaults on his psyche and his race. The love, caring and nurturance of his family through the years fostered in him the "stick-to-it-ness, resilience and perseverance" necessary to struggle through this and similar degrading encounters; strong elements of Black Hegemony were at work. He persevered, holding fast the family dream that had been infused in him, "getting an education and reaching the stars." This appears to me to be "remarkable" responses to my inquiry - How is it that Taulbert was able to matriculate through segregated institutions designed to discourage and disadvantage him? Part of the answer might well be that the resilience and perseverance that were growing as a result of racist practices had some transference to academic tasks and challenges.

The "colored " community in which Taulbert grew and matured into adulthood played a significant role in his school success. Taulbert sketches a portrait of a community

comprising church people, school personnel, employers and workplace settings that influenced his academic and social successes. They offered him a sense of hope by mitigating the negative effects of growing up in rural-southern segregated schools. Murray-Nettles' (1991) research on community contributions to academic achievement among African-American students suggest that increasingly community is being recognized as important in ongoing efforts to improve academic outcomes. She postulates that community programs such as church-based tutoring, parenting and health-education programs can have positive effects on school-related attitudes and achievement.

The church has always been an integral part of the Black community. This was especially true in Glen Allan where Jim Crow laws didn't permit young Taulbert to ever check out a book from the public library, or to mingle with white children of his own age. The church served multiple functions, meeting the educational, spiritual and social needs of the colored people of Glen Allan. The Peru Plantation school where Taulbert attended, was located within the walls of St. Mark's Missionary Baptist church. Though she had no formal education, Mother Luella Byrd served as both a spiritual and educational leader in St. Mark's and the larger Glen Allan community. She assumed general responsibility in the absence of the itinerant preacher, serving as an inspirational and religious force within the church walls and larger community. Her large physical size and commanding presence communicated "high hopes for the colored race." She utilized the church as a forum for advancing those high hopes, and for helping children to develop a sense of racial pride, as well as communicative competencies that would complement their immediate schooling

needs, and long-term life goals. Taulbert's descriptions of her efforts paint a picture of a bulwark, planning holiday programs, establishing high performance standards for the children, and demanding that children demonstrate good self discipline, linguistic, and cognitive skills as well. Taulbert's memories provide an excellent example of her works:

Mother Byrd was known for her Easter program which was a must for all the children of the church. We were expected to know our parts to perfection. Securing a commitment from the parents, she would give us our speeches one month in advance and hold practices weekly. Our limited resources never bothered her, only spurred her on to pull out of us the best she knew to be there. For her, St. Mark's Missionary Baptist Church was Washington Cathedral and we, her pupils were the cream of the crop. With determination, she'd take our unorganized minds, lack of ambition and bad grammar and create a top- quality program. Mother Byrd had no formal education herself, but she encouraged us to work hard and get an education. She was a proponent of black pride long before it became fashionable as she turned out our excuses and channeled our efforts (p. 95). The church, through the works and vision of Mother Byrd and others served as a vehicle for educational advancement. Away from the influences of whites, the church provided opportunities for members to support and promote a positive sense of self-esteem so critical to academic achievement. Taulbert's comments provide reflective evaluation and analysis on the essence of the church and the impact it had on "colored" folks lives as "... the sanctuary for our dreams ... and what he hoped to become." (p. 106)

In addition to the primary themes of family and an emphasis on education, a third

overarching theme emerges from my analysis, it is the overwhelming influence of the church in the lives of the colored people of Glen Allen. In addition to serving as a location for educational advancement, the church also was composed of auxiliaries that supported the basic needs of its membership. Ma Ponk belonged to the Sisters-Work society, a sort of social welfare club whose primary mission was to provide financial support to families of its members on the death of a loved one. The church also provided a "framework for civic involvement, the backdrop for leadership, a safe place for social gatherings." (p. 106)

Spirituality and a belief in God are part of the African-American legacy, and a black-hegemonic trait that promoted his academic achievement. Taulbert explains it in the following way: "The colored church, it was more than an institution, it was the very heartbeat of our lives. Our church was all our own, beyond the influence of white, with it's own societal structure . . . The colored church was a totally black experience." (p. 92) He recalls spending all day Sunday in church with Ma Ponk, every week of his life. He recalls the transformative nature of the church, how it changed field hands and cotton pickers into men and women of dignity as officers and leaders of the church. He recalls how the church's distance from white influences allowed men and women to support and promote a positive sense of self-esteem in themselves and among their children. He recalls how the church provided a regular platform for children to learn and practice the cognitive and communication skills so critical to school success. And, he recalls how the church and its people's fundamental belief about God's presence in their lives buoyed their spirits and enabled them to face the many challenges and painful realities of living in a segregated

society. The black church had a major influence on the hopes and dreams of Taulbert and the colored people of Glen Allan for the full weight of its impact and influence served to mitigate, to a large measure, the holocaust of living in a segregated society. It was an integral part of the community, representing all things present and future for the "colored"folks of Glen Allan. It was "the" institution responsible for advancing educational hope, articulating dreams and ensuring academic competence. The county-funded schools for coloreds were ill-funded, ill-equipped and lacking in educational supplies and aids. It was only through the support of the church and its colored membership that colored children like Taulbert were able to see beyond the depressed conditions of their environment and envision a future beyond the walls of Glen Allan.

In addition to the church community the school community also played an influential role in Taulbert's academic achievement. Miss Ross and Miss Maxey were members of the "school community" that yielded strong influences on young Taulbert. Taulbert's experiences bring him to the conclusion that "the red brick schoolhouse that had eight separate rooms was the focal point of pride for the colored community, the vehicle that would make our lives better." (p. 35) The colored teachers who staffed the school challenged and motivated students to do and be their best. " Even though we were being educated by colored teachers who in many instances came from backgrounds as deprived as our own, we were always motivated to be the best colored people." (p.35) Research literature on motivation and learning (Dweck, 1986) suggests that psychological factors other than ability determine success and learning. Children who are motivated by learning and performance goals tend toward high levels of academic achievement; they tend to

explore, initiate and engage in tasks that stimulate and promote intellectual growth. Learning goals, suggest researchers (Bandura & Dweck, 1985) help children to focus their efforts and energies, increasing their cognitive competencies, while at the same time increasing their ability to overcome and master serious obstacles and challenges. Taulbert's description of his teachers fits well the research literature on motivation and learning.

Taulbert's teachers presented a multicultural curriculum that included units on the intellectual legacy of African Americans. The lives of great African Americans served as a basis for establishing learning goals for young Taulbert and his colored classmates, and as a basis for understanding that academic achievement is not the exclusive domain of whites. Tatum (1997) suggest that young people exposed to images of African-American achievement during their early years are predisposed to achievement. This exposure has the benefit of helping young African Americans understand that school achievement is not the exclusive domain of whites. They will recognize, early on, that there is a long history of black achievement of which they can be a part. Taulbert's evaluative remarks help us to understand how his teachers influenced his school success, "... our teachers made sure we knew the life histories of Dr. George Washington Carver, Mary McLeod Bethune, Marion Anderson and Jackie Robinson. We were encouraged to learn and write about their lives. Over and over again, as we progressed through grades one through eight, these four great colored Americans were the subjects of countless essays. I would be out of college before I would fully realize that these four people, though they were great trailblazers, by no means represented the sum total of colored achievements." (p.35)

These learning goals helped to inspire and motivate. And eventually had the affect of inspiring in him a desire to be "somebody."

John Ogbu's (1986) research on academic failure among African-American youth suggest that race-consciousness and a knowledge of societal inequities serve to discourage achievement and effort optimism. According to Ogbu (1986), this lack of effort optimism occurs as a result of the gap that exist between the belief's of parents in the importance of education as the vehicle for getting ahead, and youth's ambivalence about whether they will experience reward for the academic efforts and achievement. This gap, postulates Ogbu, leads to oppositional behaviors that ultimately result in school failure. Taulbert was not lacking in effort optimism. Rather, his family's hegemonic traits such as belief in God, making a way-out-of-no-way, and willingness to sacrifice made real their desire for Taulbert to get ahead through education al means. These black hegemonic traits appears to have sustained his effort optimism.

Ogbu's (1986) research also argues that difficult living conditions and meager resources can lead to academic failure. Ogbu's research affirms the fact that race, class, social and economic opportunities affect educational perspective and efforts. What Ogbu failed to research, suggest O'Connor (1997), is how African Americans interpret obstacles to economic and social mobility, and "how they react given their nterpretations." (p. 602) Obstacles don't necessarily discourage African Americans. Rather, for many they can and do provide opportunities for creative expression and creative use of resources at hand. The "effort optimism" that Ogbu claims is lacking in African-American youth, is often kept alive through dimensions of Black Hegemony such as the ones that

influenced Taulbert: a spiritual faith and belief in God, education as the way-to-make-it, and making a way-out-of-no-way.

However, Taulbert's reflections, personal interpretations and analysis of his own life experiences suggest a very different outcome. In sharp contrast to Ogbu's research findings, Taulbert concludes that knowledge of triumphant life experiences of great African Americans were inspirational and motivated him to succeed. The stories of their lives, personal stories of struggle and triumph over social, civil, cultural and political obstacles provided success models for young Taulbert to emulate. Taulbert was able to succeed in school because his cultural identity was affirmed through interaction with committed African-American teachers and the African-American Curriculum they presented. Taulbert's life story suggest that Ogbu's theory that Black youth lack effort optimism merits further analysis. For it appears, as in the case of Taulbert, that models of African-American achievement can and do inspire and influence achievement.

The largess of the 'big four colored role models' (p. 152), according to Taulbert's analysis, was a significant and important variable in facilitating and sustained the effort optimism that Ogbu posits is critical to school success. Their storied lives inspired and motivated young Taulbert to succeed.

Teachers Ross and Maxey, through their very capable instruction and motivation, convinced Taulbert and friends that "no obstacle should stand in the way of our goals." (p. 37) The clear knowledge that the 'big four' had triumphed in spite of racism helped young Taulbert develop a sense of self-efficacy and agency that would help to shield him against the "painful reality" of segregation. The very able instruction of his African-

American teachers helped Taulbert to develop high levels of cognitive competence, and the psychological wherewithal to face the challenges of a very racist society. Taulbert went on to complete high school as Valedictorian of the colored high school that was more than 100 miles (round trip) from his home. The motivation and learning goals established during his elementary and middle school years, served as an adaptive pattern that enabled his successful matriculation through high school, and later through college. As narrator of his autobiography, Taulbert provides the following reflection: "I couldn't forget the ambitions my teachers had for me, and all those times the colored school when I'd heard about the 'big four' colored role models . . would remain with a part of me as I ventured out of the colored world." (p. 152) Miss Maxey, according to Taulbert's assessment, was "always a teacher." She was the symbol of good teaching, ever present; "always speaking correctly, dressing properly and correcting the many young colored boys and girls in our town." As teacher, principal and disciplinarian she helped to set a standard that communicated a concrete message in and out of school about Glen Allan's hopes for its children, and their expectations for learning and achievement.

Miss Maxey was also well acquainted with young Taulbert's family. She was best friends with his mother who was also a teacher, Ma Pearl and Ma Ponk who were all on the same educational wave length; they all held high expectations for young Taulbert. Consequently, they established a coherent message, and broadened the network of community support for Taulbert's school success. There was no escaping success; motivation and expectant forces were ever present at home, and in the community - church and school; there was now a continuum of differentiated supports that bode young

Taulbert well in the academic arena of school life. The messages to dream and succeed prevailed despite the negative messages of the segregated town of Glen Allan. Negative messages about the inferior abilities and status of "colored people" were diminished against the consistent and prevailing messages of Poppa, Ma Ponk, and Mama Mary. Community members represented by teachers' Maxey and Ross, and spiritual and educational leader Mother Byrd helped to create the surround of Black Hegemony. The full impact of their dreams, the treatise to get an education, the African-American curricula (McLeod, Bethune, Dr. Carver, Washington and Robinson), and the instructional strategies served to diminish negative messages about the inferior status and intellectual capacities of coloreds.

Young Taulbert, a member of this nurturing community, brought some personal qualities and capacities to the scene. In spite of the fact that the Jim Crow atmosphere of Glen Allan relegated him to a position of inferiority, young Taulbert was quite industrious. He was ambitious, skilled and goal oriented. During his growing up years he held a variety of jobs: ice pick up and delivery, leaf raking, and clerking at the Hilton grocery store. The first position as ice assistant was a turning point in his life, a life marker. Taulbert recalls Uncle Cleve, the ice-man as his first employer. He was an independent and capable businessman, respected by white and colored communities. His was one of a few good and respectable jobs in Glen Allan. Taulbert attributes Uncle Cleve with providing him with the foundations for a sense of responsibility that remains with him today. Uncle Cleve exhibited work attitudes and behaviors that lend themselves to success and achievement. Taulbert describes him as quick, but meticulous, responsive, but

not hurried, and always very polite. all qualities and work behaviors that employers and the work world viewed as important during this era of racial segregation. Taulbert observed and learned from Uncle Cleve; mimicking and eventually internalizing these behaviors to the degree that they influenced whites to employ him as a store clerk, a position that no other colored person in Glen Allan had held.

Uncle Cleve influenced young Taulbert in other ways. On their rides into Hollandale, Mississippi to pick up ice, Uncle Cleve would talk to him about life, establishing in him behaviors and attitudes that influenced employment options other than picking cotton (position as store clerk in a white store). "Yes, git you a good pattern and follow it Always be early for work, and save fifty cents out of every dollar you make." (p. 77) "Pay attention," admonished Uncle Cleve as the eager young Taulbert apprenticed with him during ice pickups and deliveries. "You always did just what he told you, never making suggestions" (ibid.), recalls Taulbert. Because young Taulbert was a good apprentice, and a good listener, he was rewarded with what was considered a good job, an assistantship to Uncle Cleve. It was these same behaviors and good work habits that landed him the job at the Hilton grocery story, and helped him to maintain it through his senior year in high school.

Exposure to the larger world was another side benefit that came from his work with Uncle Cleve. They traveled to Hollandale and Jackson, cities considerably larger than Glen Allan. These trips exposed Taulbert to the larger world of commerce and city life. While they still traveled within the confines of a segregated and discriminatory world, young Taulbert gained a sense of confidence and an approach that continue to influence

his adult endeavors. Uncle Cleve was a part of the community of people who instructed, modeled and supported his achievements.

The community also encompassed the workplace of cotton fields where most colored citizens of Glen Allan worked. Taulbert reports that "even in the fields, while cotton was being chopped and picked, they would talk across the rows about how higher education was the key to a good future. They loved calling the black male teachers 'professor.' And they were convinced we all 'had the goods' and that one day we would know it."

The total impact of community on the growing-up life of young Taulbert was significant. It helped to lessen the negative impact of growing up in a segregated world that conveyed a persistent and daunting messages that colored people were genetically, socially and intellectually inferior.

The promises of life in the northern city of St. Louis presented an opportunity that served as a significant turning point experience for Taulbert. Though young Taulbert experienced the psychological supports and resources of an extended family and school, church and work communities, he still lacked the financial resources to fulfill his dream of moving away from Glen Allan and "getting an education." Though he was Valedictorian of his high school, academic scholarships were not available at that time. So he and his family were left with few financial resources to help him pursue the dreams and ambitions that had been cultivated in him. He was caught in a dilemma, he had managed to dream, to envision another future, but where and how were they to be fulfilled? "There was no money . . . no scholarships," reports Taulbert, only dreams and desires. The solution came in "an invitation to stay with relatives in St. Louis" came at the initiation of his biological

father who himself resided there. The invitation turned out to be the vehicle through which he could fulfill his and Poppa and Ma Pearl's, his and Mama Mary's, his and Ma Ponk's, his and the colored people of Glen Allan's dreams of success.

Challenges in St. Louis were plenty, but the perseverance and resilience that emerged from challenges of earlier years assisted him as he responded to his personal drive and ambitions to succeed. The positive sense of self-esteem gained from the love, parent involvement and academic preparations of his family, teachers and community remained operative as he worked and studied in St. Louis. They remained a central part of his life, influencing his behavior and directing his path.

The black-hegemonic influences of Taulbert's life such as emphasis on education as the way-to-make-it, value of family, and perseverance and resilience had certainly proven to be operative forces during his elementary and secondary years. They sculpted, shaped, and influenced his academic achievements and professional successes in his later years.

The research studies cited throughout this chapter suggest that school success and high academic achievement such as we see evidenced in the life of Clifton Taulbert are the result of such factors as parent involvement in literacy-type activities, communication and dialogue between parent and child, community involvement, high expectations, resilience and positive sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Each of these factors were influenced by traits of Black Hegemony as described in earlier pages of this chapter.

Which of these dynamics, and in what relation to each other, have the greatest influence on academic achievement has yet to be formulated by educational researchers. However, I would surmise, based on Taulbert's evaluative comments and poetic voice,

that his family's involvement in the educational process, their establishment of expectations and psychological support were the primary influences. They served to build the requisite attitudes and orientations critical to school success. While the vignettes about his school and church experiences give us insight into these as critical variables in his overall school achievement; they appear to have been secondary to the overpowering influence of his family. Perhaps, the dynamic interplay among the three combined to give rise to the high academic performances of young Clifton Taulbert. But, Taulbert's own evaluation states explicitly who and what the dynamic was that had the greatest influence on his educational achievements: "Most of all, the hopes of my mother, the general wisdom of Poppa and the strength and determination of Ma Ponk would remain a part of me as I ventured out of the colored world." (p. 152)

The academic accomplishments of Clifton Taulbert's life appear to have been influenced by multiple variables: his own innate intellectual abilities, the powerfully black hegemonic-influences resident within the colored community of Glen Allan, and the commanding lives of Poppa and Ma Pearl, Ma Ponk, Mama Mary, Uncle Cleve, Mr. Fields, and Miss Ross and Miss Maxey. The cumulative effect was a powerful force, acting as a form of cultural capital, navigating his way through schools with inferior funding, equipment and materials. The full weight of this culturalcapital immunized Taulbert against the potentially devastating effect of living in a segregated society that denigrated coloreds. It significantly increased the possibility that his school performance and academic achievements would be high, and they were. He was class Valedictorian. And it influenced his college graduation eight years later.

The colored people of Glen Allan provided a source of cultural capital for young Taulbert that enabled him to triumph in spite of a segregated society, poorly funded and equipped schools, and social mores that would deny him his inalienable right to pursue a full life, liberty and the pursuit of an education that was his and every American's entitlement. The sources of cultural capital are evident in the parental behaviors (i.e., establishment of goals, regular conversation) of Poppa and Ma Pearl, Ma Ponk, Mama Mary and Mr. Fields, and the dreams (i.e., get an education, go as far as you can) they inspired. They are evident in their perspectives on the value of getting an education, and in the psychological coping mechanisms of resilience and perseverance they fostered in him. They are evident in the African-American curricula (i.e., instruction on the 'big four': Carver, Washington, McLeod Bethune, Anderson) taught by Miss Maxey, Miss Ross, and Mother Luella Byrd. And finally, they are evident in the work habits and orientations taught by Uncle Cleve. Young Clifton grew up with a rich resource of people, beliefs and values that facilitated his high academic achievements and school success. The sources of cultural capital were a form of wealth that generated measurable outcomes: eighth grade, high school and college graduations; rankings of excellence in performance, Valedictorian and sergeant status in the U.S. Air Force; publication of four books, each of which has a common theme - the nourishing love, support and guidance of an extended family whose voices continue to guide and direct him. Taulbert refers to this cultural capital as " a treasure more valuable and enduring than land ownership ... source of strength to me in all the years since ... " (p. 6) His interpretation, couched in these words, is what leads me to this conclusion.

How and in what ways did Clifton Taulbert and the other colored children of Glen Allan matriculate through educational institutions and systems designed to disadvantage them? I propose that the personal stories of Taulbert's lived experiences provide compelling and credible answers: teachers who facilitated and sustained effort optimism through the presentation of a curriculum with the legacy of African-American achievement as a central theme; family members who dared to dream and envision a better life; family members who motivated their children by establishing standards of excellence and high expectations; family members who developed networks of family and community support in order to promote and sustain effort optimism; family members who made personal and financial sacrifices for their children; family members who had an active faith in God; family members who taught their children to persevere even in the face of challenge and struggle; and family members who communicated often with their children. These black hegemonic traits operated as pervasive and unifying forces that significantly influenced the academic achievements of Clifton L. Taulbert.

And in Taulbert's own words "even though segregation was a painful reality for us, there were some very good things that happened . . . Today, I enjoy the broader society in which I live and would never want to return to forced segregation, but I also have a deeply felt sense that important values were conveyed to me in my childhood . . . As a child, I was not only protected, but also nourished, encouraged, taught and loved by people who with no land, little money and few other resources, displayed the strength of a love which knew no measure . . . In ordinary daily living through very difficult times, they showed themselves to be a great people." (p. 6-7) This evaluative comment about how

his family and the people of Glen Allan contributed to his success helps me to understand more fully his perspective and voice on the forces that influenced his success.

Taulbert's story is so strong and compelling that the variables and educational processes fostered by home, school and community merit extensive attention from educational leaders, researchers, and policy makers as the search continues for answers on effective pedagogy for supporting and advancing academic achievement in African-American children.

Chapter 5

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

A precocious child was Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Young Gates). Early on he was marked for academic excellence as a direct outgrowth of parental values, expectations and behaviors. Young Gates was the youngest of two children (Rocky, the older brother, was "five years and six grades ahead") born in 1950 to Pauline Augusta Coleman Gates (Pauline) and Henry Louis Gates (Henry). He benefitted immensely from their educational philosophy "that their sons were both smart and able, and that they would provide the best for us, so that no white person could put us down or keep us out for reasons of appearance, color aside." (p. 35) This philosophy, a form of cultural capital, permeated their lives, penetrating all aspects: educational, financial, social, and religious In Colored People, Gates' autobiography, we learn of the innumerable ways in which Pauline and Henry Gates invested their economic resources, social prowess and intellectual acumen in order to fulfill their dreams -- their sons becoming doctors. High yield from their investments were the expectations of Pauline and Henry, and a high yield is what emanated. Both sons became doctors: Rocky a medical doctor and Henry a Ph. D., doctor of philosophy.

Growing up during the Pre-Civil Rights era of the 1950s and 1960s in segregated Piedmont, West Virginia, provided few advantages for young boys of African-American descent. Small town Piedmont was located on the side of a hill in the Allegheny Mountains; it had a total population of 2,565 in 1950; three hundred fifty-one (351) of whom were colored. Legal, social and institutional restrictions and limitations for coloreds were the hallmarks of the day: coloreds couldn't eat in restaurants, try on clothes in stores, use certain bathrooms, vote or own property. Piedmont was a segregated community, designed to preserve white privilege and to perpetuate black subservience.

Given the political and social climate of this time period, it was imperative that Pauline and Henry adopt a philosophical stance that would have far-reaching and pervasive influence in the lives of their sons. They needed a philosophy that would shield their sons against the racism and bigotry of the south, and the racism and bigotry of Piedmont. It was imperative, from their perspective that they act as their sons' sole providers and advocates if they ever hoped to fulfill their dreams of school success, and medical careers for their sons. And so they did. Gates' memoirs reflect many instances of his parents providing for their basic needs: emotional, social, medical, educational, spiritual, cultural. Their fierce determination to be the sole providers for their children was essential to securing their dreams. It was of critical importance for colored children growing up in a racist community where they were viewed as incapable, disenfranchised, and not entitled to the same educational privileges that whites assumed to be their exclusive birthright. Pauline and Henry's attitude was that, as parents, they would provide the foundation,

the rest was up to her children, "once they went into those white places."

During his preschool years Young Gates had shown promising signs of individual attributes (i.e., intellectual abilities, aspirations, achievement motivation) that often lead to academic achievement. Dweck (1986) suggests that motivational processes such as the establishment of personal goals, mastery of academic skills, and risk taking behaviors, influence learning. Gates' description of Pauline and Henry's parental behaviors are consistent with the motivational processes identified in Dweck's research findings. He reports in his memoirs that he had "shown" on his preschool test; "I was smart, I had a good memory . . . " (p. 93) His astute and remarkably responsive mother, Pauline, recognized his exceptional abilities, and taught him ". . . to read and write in one day" (p. 29), using the motivational processes identified by Dweck. She and her husband had infused in him the impenetrable belief that he could learn and do anything. And he did. His school record is replete with outstanding achievements such as skipping a class grade; test scores so high in the second grade (489 out of 500) that teachers from other classrooms came down to his classroom to witness such a remarkable scoring. Young Gates was a straight A student throughout his school years, was elected to the position of class president four times. During his junior-high school years he won the state Golden Horseshoe Award for excellence in History, achieved valedictorian status in high school and graduated summa cum laude from Yale University. A precocious child, a precocious beginning, a brilliant academic career.

Gates' poignant tales of family life, friendship, extended family and teachers portray a mosaic of black hegemonic experiences and motivational patterns that influenced his

learning and advanced his academic career. Emphasis on education, family and kinship ties, spiritual values, social activism and making a way out-of no way are the aspects of Black Hegemony that, when combined with the motivational processes of his parents, Young Gate's innate ability and personal motivations crescendoed into a remarkable academic career that is difficult to parallel in the best of many worlds.

For example, the growing up experiences of Malcolm X were quite different from those of Gates. Malcolm X 's autobiography contains an incident that occurred between himself and a favorite teacher, Mr. Ostrowski, that he and his 8th-grade classmates admired. The following incident reported in Theresa Perry's 1996 publication, Teaching Malcolm X, provides the reader with Malcolm's perspective on how his life was shortchanged, his academic career negatively influenced, and his effort optimism circumvented: "Mr. Ostrowski looked surprised, I remember, and leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands behind his head. He kind of smiled and said, 'Malcolm, one of life's first needs is for us to be realistic. Don't misunderstand me now. But you've got to be realistic about being a nigger. A lawyer -- that's a not realistic goal for a nigger. You need to think about something you can be. You're good with your hands -- making things. Everybody admires your carpentry shop work. Why do you not plan on carpentry? People like you as a person -- You'd get all kinds of work." (Perry, 1966, p. 66) Perry includes Malcolm's analysis of this incident in her book. Malcolm remembers it as "the first major turning point of my life . . . it was then that I began to change - inside . . ." (p. 66) Up until that point, notes Perry, " he had been an honor student, and the year before, in the 7th grade, had been elected class president. Now, Malcolm drew away from

white people . . . he came to class and answered only when called upon. At the end of 8th grade, he left school, for good and boarded a Greyhound bus for Boston." (p. 67) Malcolm's life in stark contrast to Gates was not bound for academic success. He did not have the benefit of parents, family or community who were imbibed with traits of Black Hegemony. He did not have the benefit of family members (father died early in his life, and his mother was institutionalized for a mental disorder) who could provide the requisite motivational patterns or interventions that would help him sustain his interest in school. He did not have the benefit of committed teachers who could motivate and inspire him. Malcolm was bright and alone in the world, struggling with the assault of racism, and its many negative consequences.

In terms of academic experiences Young Gates was more fortunate than Malcolm. He had an intact family that served as his advocate in the school system, and as advocates who intervened on his behalf when the inevitable crisis on academic achievement arose. Where Young Gates had teachers who respected his scholarship and intellectual abilities, Malcolm did not. While the intellectual prowess of Gates and Malcolm might well have been similar. The surround of cultural capital was significantly different. Malcolm did not have familial support and community resources to help him buffer the pains of racism.

Pauline and Henry Gates emphasized the importance of education through their family life and general parental behaviors. Making a way-out-of no way, a dimension of Black Hegemony, was no stranger to Miss Pauline. Before her sons' birth she had already established a legacy of financial sacrifice and support. She had quit school during her junior high days to support her family (brothers and sisters) and for the specific purpose of

putting her four brothers through college. She found a variety of ways to support their education by sending them money, washing their laundry and mending their clothes. Pauline Augusta Coleman was committed and determined to do whatever was necessary to secure an education for her brothers. She was as intentional in her approach to educating her two sons. In time, she would make similar sacrifices for her sons just as she had done for her brothers before. Years later, Pauline received public recognition and reward for her sacrifices and the value she placed on education when her brother, Harry, one of the four college-educated brothers, decided to pen a letter to producers of a television program called the Big Payoff. Pauline was declared the winner and received an assortment of prizes, as well as admiration and commendations from family, friends and neighbors.

This same level of commitment to supporting educational achievement was evident in her relationship with Young Gates and his older brother, Rocky. Right from the start she was goal directed. She was prepared to reignite those same motivational processes she had so successfully utilized with her brothers. She was primed to encourage, in her own children, scholastic achievement (mastery of reading, writing and arithmetic), risk behaviors (e.g., social activism), and personal aspirations. She wanted them to achieve, to become doctors. Consequently, she prepared herself to make the same sacrifices for her children as she had previously made for her brothers. Her full attentions, energies and resources were focused toward this end. There's no question that the black hegemonic trait of "education as the way-to-make-it" was not only valued but operative in the Gates' household. His parents knew that education was a ticket to greater freedom and upward

mobility. This trait influenced the development of mastery-oriented and adaptive behaviors that led to the many academic successes of Young Master Gates.

Pauline was an attentive and responsive parent, paying careful attention to the interests and individual needs of her son. She taught him to read and write only after he expressed and interest and desire to do so. She subscribed to the Jack N' Jill magazine for him as a method through which she could expose him to the world outside of Piedmont. Gates recollects vivid memories of daily interactions with his mother in which she took the time to spend with him, to sit and communicate with him. He felt secure in the feeling that he was special, that his mother loved him "like life itself."

Pauline Gates was deliberately thoughtful and strategic in her continual preparation of Young Gates' school success. She purchased learning materials that were informational and instructional in nature. Gates recounts memories of his mother reading through her subscribed issues of McCall Magazine as he played with the puppets, marionettes and paper dolls she had purchased him. Each of these items, by today's conventions, are considered important tools in learning and literacy production. Gates came to understand the value and importance of reading as he observed his mother engaged in the act of reading. It wasn't the reading of McCall's Magazine so much as the "act" of her reading that influenced his learning.

He remembers his mother creating a physical environment for learning by purchasing (from a former employer) for him (at age ten) a desk and a bookshelf for reference books (for him and Rocky). He remembers his parents bringing along literacy materials (i.e., books and games) as they traveled via train to distant locations. He remembers his mother

tutoring both him and his brother at times when support was not forthcoming from the schools, at which they were enrolled. Gates reports that his mother tutored his brother for a state literacy competition, and himself for his valedictory speech that his teacher would not have approved in advance of its presentation. Gates wrote his own valedictory speech "defying tradition, because it was not allowed." (p. 191) His mother had, intentionally, designed an instructional pedagogy that fostered high levels of literacy, literate behaviors and communicative competence sufficient enough to support school achievement. Visions of success for her sons were communicated to them, verbally and through action. "She wanted both her sons to be doctors." (p. 11) So she and her husband created an atmosphere that motivated their children to learn. They established the requisite psychological, emotional and physical environments that supported learning and intellectual curiosity. And, they used pedagogical strategies and behaviors that most likely ensured the fruition of their dreams.

Pauline Gates served as a role model through her role as secretary of the school PTA and Chief Eulogist at her church for her son(s)' achievements. She was known throughout the segregated community of Piedmont as an elocutionist, a poet, a leader, and as an eloquent speaker. People in church (where she delivered eulogies) and the school community (where she crafted and presented minutes of the PTA) admired her pronunciation, the clear manner in which she articulated words, and scripted her thoughts and ideas. Pauline Gates made such an indelible imprint upon Young Gates that he was impressed with the security of ". . . her knowledge of things, of how to do things and function in the world, of how to be in the world and command respect." (p. 34) His

mother's home instruction, community leadership, literate behaviors, and manner of interacting and communicating established a solid foundation for the acquisition of adaptative behaviors needed to succeed in school.

Henry, Gates' father, was also quite an active partner in facilitating his son's academic achievements, and in fostering and maintaining a loving relationship with his son as well. While he always worked two jobs, as loader at the local paper mill and custodian at the phone company, he made time to interact with his family. The quality and nature of his involvement were so valued by Young Gates that, at age eighteen, he made the ultimate salutation to his father by changing his Christian name from Louis Smith Gates to that of his father's, Henry Louis Gates. This seemed to be a symbolic gesture of pride that he felt for his father as well as the love, affection and appreciation he held for him. This action appears to me to be a testimony to the important and pervasive influence Henry, as a father, had in the life of his youngest son.

Gates' autobiography recounts times in which his relationship with his father was strained, times in which they seemed to have little in common, and to be at odds with one another. He speaks of how he envied the close relationship between his father and older brother. An interest in and love of sports seemed to bind his father and brother together, an arena in which Young Gates had little interest, and very little skill. A klutz is the picture he paints of himself as he tries out different sports throughout his growing up years. In sports, he most definitely was not agile. Definitely, not able. Definitely not precocious. His ineptness at sports seemed to place barriers between him and his father, excluding him from the longed-for relationship his older brother had with his father.

Gates' interpretive remarks helps me to understand how he came to resolve the inner turmoil he experienced as a result of his inability to connect with his father. He reports that he "made peace with sports by and by, and was comfortable watching Rocky and Daddy watch sports. But I could never experience it with the absorption, they were capable of, could never live and breathe sports as they did." (p. 83) Gates attempted to compensate for his ineptness by reading Sports' literature and writing about his Little League in the "Piedmont Herald." While these activities allowed peripheral participation, they did not get at the type of closeness he longed for with his father.

A turning point in their relationship arose when Young Gates, during his adolescence, began to participate in fierce, but friendly, debates with his father. Gates draws a vivid picture of a home culture that was thoughtful and ripe for learning. He recalls the many times in which his father engaged him in fervent and passionate dialogue and discourse around contemporary issues of the day. They held lively debates on issues of relevance as they were occurring on the local, national and global scene. Civil Rights, Vietnam, Black Power, Dr. King, Stokely, Afros, the Panthers were all issues that were hotly debated between father and son, and his friends - the Fearsome Foursome, a black consciousness club of which Young Gates was a founding member. Gates reports long hours of debate, going to bed debating and getting up just hours later to continue the friendly fire. Discourse and debate were the primary avenues through which he established the "longed for" relationship with his father. From an educator's perspective it was a type of parent/child interaction that contributed, significantly, to the development of motivational behaviors that affect and influence learning. It also appeared to influence his

continued precociousness and ongoing school success. The ability to engage in rigorous dialogue, think strategically, and integrate complex subject matter are high-level thinking skills, indicative of intellectual and cognitive agility. It was in this context that the father/son relationship so longed for solidified. It occurred in the context of a culture of ideas, thought and learning. Young Gates' high verbal and linguistic skills were nurtured and honed in a home environment where mom and dad were cognizant of the need to be a source of capital for their sons' educational aspirations. Their high and long-term investment had high yield - - graduation summa cum laude from Yale University.

The practice of ongoing debate facilitated the development of metacognition or higher-level thinking skills in Young Gates. His intellectual curiosity, and ability to be thoughtful, analytic and reflective are partially attributable to the great debates and discourse that were an integral part of his household. They provided him a comfortable and familiar frame that ultimately prepared him for the rigor of academic thought and discipline. His capacities for intellectual thought shown forth, brilliantly, in his freshman year at Potomac State College, so much so that his advisor, Duke Whitmore, recommended him for a more challenging intellectual environment at an Ivy League school. Precocious Gates followed up selecting Yale as opposed to Harvard and Princeton, because his cousins had attended them.

Fond memories of his father (Henry) as a storyteller are also captured throughout the evaluative remarks contained within his narrative. "Daddy loved telling stories about his family, and I loved listening to them, mostly because they were so funny," reports Gates (p. 68). These childhood memories point out one of the meaningful ways Henry was

involved in his child's life, one of the ways in which he chose to communicate and interact with him. Henry's storytelling is another concrete example of the many and varied ways he and Pauline Gates involved themselves in their children's lives. It also demonstrates how daily learning experiences related to academic learning ebbed and flowed through the ages and stages of Young Gates' life. The impact of these parental interactions cannot be diminished, surely there is a strong correlate between his school achievement and his father's literate (e.g., debates, storytelling) interactions.

Extended family gatherings also provided opportunity for storytelling. The Coleman family, his mother's nine brothers and two sisters, would gather often. Gates reports that he "loved hearing them talk and watching their rituals . . . I even loved being with the Coleman boys at one of their shrimp or squirrel feeds . . . Generally, though I just enjoyed being on the edge of the circle, watching and listening and laughing, basking in the warmth, memorizing the stories, trying to strip away illusions, getting at what was really coming down." (p. 83) Gates had an analytic mind capable of deconstructing events, looking for the larger meaning(s) that often give birth to one's thoughts, ideas and actions. His love for stories, fiction and literary found some satisfaction through interaction with his father and extended family members.

His parents' behavioral patterns included a number of different and salient areas: high expectations for success; interest in his home activities; consistent monitoring of time; frequent parent and child activities involving reading, conversing; praiseworthy sentiments expressed for his talents, abilities and achievements. Educational researchers (Clark, 1983 and Clark, 1981) stress the importance of parent involvement as a parent's primary

contribution to a child's success in school. Frequent and continuous levels of parent involvement are clearly evident throughout the narrative of Young Gates' life. Each of these behavioral patterns are concrete expressions of the black hegemonic trait - emphasis on education as the way-to-make-it. And more specifically, they reflect Henry and Pauline's belief in the value of an education, a belief that found pervasive and creative expression in their daily lives and ongoing interactions with their son(s). And, it was a belief that influenced the school success of Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Young Gates thrived in the supportive environment of his parents home. He developed hobbies and interests of his own that grew out of the dynamic relationship he had with his parents. He loved photo collection and photography, reporting that he learned a great deal about his family's history from old photographs and the stories that his father wove around them at home and as they visited the homes of relatives. He also enjoyed watching and studying people, listening to their stories and conversations. He reports that his "mind was like a tape recorder, incising on my memory anything that came along." (p. 175) Later he would try to deconstruct what was said by stripping away illusions and getting at what the person was really attempting to say. And books, he enjoyed reading books. Saturdays were spent at the library after Mrs. Iverson, a teacher forbade him from reading and reporting on "fluff." She assigned him to more complex and challenging books that were better matched to his mental abilities. After reading the classic A Tale of Two Cities he was hooked, becoming a prolific reader. Charged by the challenge of ideas in similar books he went on to read Les Miserables, to biographies of Einstein and Schweitzer. Other books included My Sweet Charlie, the Agony and the Ecstasy and all of the listings

of Dell Authors. He read and read, and read and read with the permission and blessing of parents who supported the growth and perpetuation of this type of behavior from a son whom they dreamed would one day become a doctor.

Family and kinship ties are important dimensions of Black Hegemony. They had an indisputable presence in Gates' life, impacting and affecting his school accomplishments. He consciously and intentionally adopted the lifestyle choices and orientations of the Gates' family (his father's brothers and sisters, their husbands and children). As he compared their behaviors with that of the Colemans', his mother's side of the family (nine brothers, three sisters and their children), he concluded that he resonated more with the Gates; "They were free thinkers and welcomed me into their ranks." (p. 188) "They read detective novels and traded them with each other, did crossword puzzles and loved puns." (p. 67) In young Gate's eyes the extended members of the Gates' family provided an extension of the home culture that his parents had provided, a literate environment filled with ideas, thoughts and challenges for intellectual mastery (e.g., discourse and debate, working crossword puzzles, reading detective novels and reciting puns). Since Gates loved to "strip away illusions getting at what was really going on," the literate-type activities of the Gates' family seemed a good match for his interests, personal ambitions and individual orientation toward intellectual engagement. As it turns out, they were also a good compliment to the types of motivational processes and learning activities that introduced Young Gates to the larger world outside Piedmont, and some of the linguistic and cognitive skills requisite to succeed in it.

The Coleman family presents a somewhat different picture of life in Piedmont with a

strong sense of family and cultural tradition." "Being a Coleman was a very big deal in Piedmont. My uncles and aunts were very well thought of; most went as far at the paper mill as a colored man could go, in their respective trades, once the mill decided to allow blacks out of the loaders. The Colemans were the first colored to own guns and hunt on white land, the first to become Eagle Scouts, the first to got to college, the first to own property." (p. 53) Their collective behaviors, as described by Gates, and the genre of their world was colored. "The soul of that world was colored . . . and after the fifties, even fought to keep alive the tradition of the segregated all-colored schools . . . They feared that world where so much humiliation had lain in wait, ambushing them blind sided, unawares. And they hated that which made them fear. That is, I think, why they hated some of us, the first generation of integrated wannabes, recognizing us as the real threat to the ordered universe they had constructed with such painstaking care for such a long time." (p. 65)

Gates appears especially critical of the Colemans, interpreting their focus on family and cultural tradition as pathological. Their attempts to hold fast the colored community and institutions that had previously nurtured them was perceived of by Gates as fear of facing the new world order - an integrated world. Their concern is reflected in the contemporary debate on integration and its impact on learning outcomes for African-Americans. There is one school of thought that suggests that African-American children fared better in segregated school settings, and another that argues just the opposite. Perhaps, the Colemans' perspective mirrors that of some contemporary African Americans who argue, persuasively, for the establishment of ethnic schools that support the cultural traditions, beliefs and practices that are believed facilitate high academic achievement.

Gates strongly disagreed with the Colemans' position on most everything. An antagonism existed between him and his uncles, growing to its peak during his adolescent years. His growing alienation from his Coleman uncles increased as he matriculated through school. "The more I rejected their advance, the more bitterly we argued, the quieter they got around me, at least about my successes -- though they got louder about

my racial politics and my growing discomfort with the Vietnam war." (p. 144) As he began participating in the culture of the 1960s, smoking, adopting the new "Black Consciousness," growing an Afro, supporting Stokley and Malcolm X, his uncles' displeasure increased. They typecasted him as delinquent, disrespectful, and on many occasions made it known that they felt he had "too much mouth." However, the independent spirit and sense of specialness that his parents (Pauline and Henry) fostered in him continued in spite of his uncles' criticism. In spite of their criticism, his mother's faith and belief in him continued. "Faced with what must have been a painful choice between her loyalty to her brothers and her loyalty to the sons whose independence she nurtured and encouraged, my mother never wavered. Much to the chagrin of the Coleman clan, she always took our side." (p. 184) This sense of independence catapulted him into the midst of the turbulent 60s and 70s, providing him with the wherewithal to embrace some of the new age ideas and concepts that were issuing forth ideas that the Colemans appeared reticent to embrace.

Vignettes of the Colemans allow windows into the various and sundry ways that they nevertheless had positive influence in the life of Young Gates. Gates felt they were not good storytellers like the Gates; they were considered, by Young Gates and his father, to be resourceful, talented and motivated. For example, Uncle Harry (Reverend Harry A. Coleman) introduced him to church camp, to which he went every summer. Uncle Jim sometimes referred to as Nemo, taught him and his young friends many non-scholastic skills: swimming, fishing, hunting, and the survival skills of Boy Scouts. Uncle Earkie, on the other hand introduced him to the world of music: R &B, jazz, soul. Dinah Washington, LaVern Baker, Brook Benton, Nat King Cole, and Ben E. King were the entertainment personalities that he and Uncle Earkie listened to. While listening to music he received advice on women, how to get them, treat them and keep them. Gates recalls feeling really good when he left Uncle Earkie's home.

Yearly, the Colemans sponsored an annual picnic that was the envy of all the coloreds in Piedmont. Though one needed to be a Coleman to be invited, that didn't keep others from wishing to be a part of so celebrated an event. In general, the Colemans were self

sufficient, ambitious, and especially good with their hands (carpentry, masonry, gardening, hunting, fishing), remarkably different from the Gates who were more heady and intellectual. They, the Colemans were inescapable. They were involved in the life of the community; they were everywhere watching over and chiding their sister Pauline's incorrigible son. Though Gates felt a sense of alienation from them, his life appeared more balanced as a result of their more mundane interactions. They helped to provide balance to his ever increasing intellectual nature.

The Colemans' many activities represented the degree to which they were involved in the life of the community. To a large measure Young Gates involvement with the Coleman's served this purpose. Uncle Jim led community activities by heading the Boy Scout Troupe that Gates was a member of. He taught all the colored children to swim at the local pond. And he taught them how to hunt and fish. In addition, to these activities Young Gates had an active extracurricular life as he played on Little League and basketball teams, attended Summer camp throughout his adolescent years, and helped to found the Fearsome Foursome, a black consciousness cultural club. Murray-Nettles' (1991) research indicates that African-American high-school students tend to fair well academically when they are involved in extracurricular activities. In the context of these research finding I believe that this less academic dimension of his life coupled with the intellectual environment of his home created a dynamic force that contributed to his many school achievements.

Religious spirituality is an important hallmark of Black Hegemony, prevalent in some form or fashion within most African-American communities. Piedmont, West Virginia was no exception. Gates' assessment of Piedmont's religious life is somewhat similar. "What the church did provide was a sense of community, moments of intimacy, of belonging to a culture." (p. 116) Gates attended the Evangelical Methodist church under the guidance and watchful eye of Sister Sarah who through her teaching, preachings and exhortations persuaded him to be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus. Get yourself together she would preach, stop that dancing, drinking and gambling. Her holy ways

convinced Gates to consider joining the church at age 12, and to stop his sinful ways. And he did. He became involved in a life of sacrifice and prayer that would later prove useful during periods of stress.

Paris, theologian and author of The Spirituality of African Peoples, provides a significant paradigm for understanding how religious spirituality worked in the life of Gates and the coloreds in Piedmont, West Virginia:

The "spirituality" of a people refers to the animating and integrative power that constitutes the principal frame of meaning for individual and collective experiences. Metaphorically, the spirituality of a people is synonymous with the soul of a people: the integrating center of their power and meaning. In contrast with that of some peoples, however, African spirituality is never disembodied but always integrally connected with the dynamic movement of life. On the one hand, the goal of that movement is the struggle for survival while, on the other hand, it is the union of those forces of life that have the power either to threaten and destroy life, one the one hand, or to preserve and enhance it, on the other hand. (Paris, 1995, p. 22) The meaning spritiuality and a belief in God gave to Gates' life is found in his detailed and explicit explanations of his changed behavior. Before age twelve, Gates reports, he had stopped lying and cheating on his friends. His behaviors became so religious he even prayed for Straight A's on his report card, and low and behold he got them. Once he prayed for a fishing pole, and was startled when have received it only three days later. "That prayer business was more powerful and useful than I'd thought," reports Gates. Buoyed by these unanticipated miracles, he was prepared to face one of the most challenging periods of his life.

His faith and religious practices were to be of support and comfort during the upcoming family crisis. His mother's struggle with depressive disorder and the Change of Life was a turning point experience in his life. Her continuous battle with these illnesses turned Young Gates toward religion more fully than in his previous twelve years. His mother whom he adored was no longer emotionally available to him. He explains, "Mama's change was the great crisis in my life, the crossroads of my childhood, I was devastated." (p. 127) Instead of daily conversations about life, school, etc., she spoke

constantly of death. Irrational fears developed, and she began to gain weight, and hoard goods in preparation for some perceived forthcoming catastrophe. For example, she began to buy bolts and bolts of material, placing them throughout the house until there was no room left to store them or anything else. Finally, the depression overwhelmed her requiring hospitalization.

Gates' reflections and analysis reveal that he felt a sense of responsibility for his mother's condition. His guilt at breaking a ritual - crossing his legs, left calf over right, rather than right over left - plunged him into a penance that spurred a degree of church involvement unparalleled during his youth. Gates recounts the experience by relating the following actions, "That Sunday when Mama went away, I started to atone. I prayed all day, all evening, and the next day: If God would just let Mama not die, as she was convinced she was going to do, I would give my life to Christ and join the church." (p. 130) After his mother's return home, Gates kept his promise and joined the church at the age of twelve. Gates' interprets his actions as the reason for his mother's illness. This complication in his life, led to a turning point in his faith, and in his relationship with his mother who because of illness became less psychologically available to him.

Gates reports that he did not go to dances, play cards, listen to rock and roll or swear at his classmates. He willingly sacrificed as a part of his atonement, and as a part of his religious instructions via church officials, Sister Sarah and Reverend Mon-roe. His desire to have his mother's life spared, inspired these chaste-like behaviors. However, the normally precocious and intellectually curious young Gates began to question and search for answers that Sister Sarah and Reverend Mon-roe could not answer. Their faith was such that young Gates felt stilted, like "an automaton controlled by heavenly remote" (p. 134), in constant fear that some imminent tragedy was about to occur. He was in a state of disequilibration, desiring a spiritual life, but one that didn't imprison him as Methodism did. Rather, he sought a spiritual life that was liberating as in the Episcopal faith, one that was more consistent with and characteristic of the "freethinking" Gates.

Relief from religious automation and oppression came when he himself was hospitalized and bed ridden for a good part of a year. While hospitalized for a dislocated

hip he met Father Smith, an Episcopal priest. Father Smith "treated me as an equal in conversation; and he didn't think an awakening skepticism was inconsistent with an adolescent's underlying faith. He seemed to offer an intellectual framework to go with my spirituality." (p. 143) Through the literature provided by Father Smith and their lengthy conversations, Young Gates was finally able to comfortably assimilate religious fervor and expression into his intellectual framework and daily practices. Father Smith granted him permission to engage in world activities such as listening to music and dancing, the very things Sister Sarah proclaimed sinful. His brother Rocky remarks that " . . . he checked into the hospital with a Bible in one hand and a cross in the other, then checked out with a deck of cards and a saxophone." (p. 146) Religion and a sense of spirituality as dimensions of Black Hegemony was operative forces in his life, providing meaning and interpretation to his experiences.

Additional opportunities for exploration of his religious faith arose as he attended the Episcopal church camp during the summers of 1965 to 1967. During religious encounters with peers his age he took advantage of opportunities to explore the contours of his faith and the world beyond. The encounters assisted him in a growing faith that persisted throughout his high school and early collegiate years. It was in 1966 that he gave up the evangelical Methodist church and joined Father Smith's church in Keyser (the County seat), and a few years later began to worship with his mother and father at St. James Episcopal church in Westernport, Maryland, a neighboring town. While this move was not celebrated by Sister Sarah and his uncles (on the Coleman side); it was by his parents, especially his father who had been a longtime Episcopalian. Gates reports that his father was "delighted" when he joined his church. And I imagine, that this decision was yet another move that brought father and son closer together.

One of Gates' adolescent dreams was to become a minister. However, the openness of the Episcopal faith liberated him, allowing him the freedom and support to pursue his intellectual curiosities, questions and concepts that were forever capturing his thoughts. Finally, he realized that he did not need to be a minister to pursue questions of the universe. He discovered, through association with Father Smith, that he could pursue

these same queries elsewhere, and via other professions. These revelations seemed to free him from the oppressive bondage of Sister Sarah's and Reverend Monroe's throes.

Young Gates was not the only religious member of his family and community. Big Mom, Pauline's mother and his grandmother to whom he was very close, was very religious. She prayed a lot and went to church every Sunday. Several of his uncles were ministers (Harry, Jim and Earkie). And the three different denominations serving the colored community had continuous camp meetings and revivals. While not a lot of the narrative from Colored People is devoted to the religious life of coloreds in Piedmont, a significant amount is devoted to Young Gates' growing understanding of the role religion can play in one's life. We are led through pages of explanatory text describing how religion influenced the multiple dimensions of his life: a religious faith that sustained him through both a physical separation and psychological inaccessibility from his beloved mom during her illness; his studies (praying for A's); the exploration of intellectual ideas and ideals with Father Smith; and a religious faith that he could share with his father. The episcopal religion, suggests Gates, freed him to participate in a faith that released him from the shackles of oppressive Methodism, and freed him to pursue his lifelong dream of becoming a doctor. The intellectual engagement with Father Smith provided an opportunity for him to discuss career issues and to figure out how he could maintain his interest in religion without per suing it as a career. Discussions with Father Smith helped him to do that, and ultimately to stay on course with his original plans to become a medical doctor.

While Pauline attended church with less regularity than Big Mom, she supported her sons' participation in church-sponsored activities. She did not assume her mother's role as religious matriarch of the family. Rather, she assumed an equally important role, that of social and political activist, a black-hegemonic trait that has, in many cases, resulted in greater educational access and opportunity for African Americans in general.

Pauline's activism created quite a legacy for young Gates. His reflections interpret her actions as influential. He says that he learned political activism from watching his mother, "she showed us how to fight . . . she loved to make things happen" (p. 203), he reports.

Example after example is woven throughout this narrative story highlighting the myriad ways in which she advocated for her children and the colored race. As mentioned earlier, she placed her own education on hold while obtaining a job so that her brothers could attend college. When denied the opportunity to try on clothing in stores she would always leave in protest with her sons in tow, proclaiming aloud, "we don't buy clothes we can't try on." (p. 17) When young Gates was hospitalized and not getting a proper diagnosis for his hip condition he witnessed his mother talking back to a white person, and a doctor to boot. He had never witnessed anyone, take on a white person. When his brother's junior-high school teacher refused to coach him for a literary competition, his mother stepped right in and coached him nightly until he perfected it, and eventually won the competition. When young Gates could not rely on his high-school teacher, Mrs. Iverson, to assist him with his valedictory speech, his mother stepped right in coaching him until the speech reached perfection. He eventually won his teacher's approval (upon presentation). His mother's activist interventions allowed him opportunity to express his views and perspectives in a racist environment that would not have permitted such.

She represented the colored race as she read the minutes of the PTA. Colored people came to the meeting just to hear her read, and to witness such boldness and eloquence emanating from a colored person. And, before he was born, his mother and others participated in a Civil Rights march to demand the right of the colored to be educated. She had a long history of social and political advocacy. A history that influenced high-academic achievement for her sons such as winning state competitions and the right to compose and deliver an authentic valedictory speech.

The social activism of Pauline Augusta Coleman Gates was witnessed, adopted and emulated by her youngest son, Henry Louis. Fueled by the rapidly changing civil and political landscape of the 60s, the great debates with his father, Young Gates was prime for social activism During his high school years he led and participated in civil rights protest. The Fearsome Foursome, a black consciousness club, of which he was a charter member, " led the first boycott in the history of Piedmont. All the black kids stayed home on the day of the King funeral - - and got bad citizenship grades in return. Some of us

attended prayer vigils, like one we organized at the Episcopal church." (p. 188) They also closed down the Swordfish, a hangout for college kids. Because the owner refused to integrate after a visit from the States Human Rights Commission, the Swordfish was closed down. Young Gates and pals claimed another victory. The following remarks of his father are indicative of the depth of his involvement in and commitment to political activism: "Boy, how do you get into all this trouble? . . . What y'all do now?" (p. 197) Young Gates emulated well the social activism of his mother. He learned how to speak out, how to handle himself, and how to make things happen. And so he did. These were skills that he would take with him into collegiate environments, and skills that would eventually gain him access toprestigious Yale University.

Young Gates seemed to seize every opportunity to make a political statement. For example, he defied tradition by writing his own valedictory speech which he delivered without prior knowledge of his high-school English teacher with whom he had practiced the traditional prepared speech. His speech covered contemporary issues of the 60s: Vietnam, abortion, civil rights and "the necessity to defy norms out of love." He challenged the system when, one year later, applying to Yale for admission he composed a statement filled with hostile rhetoric sure to alienate any reader: "My grandfather was colored, my father was Negro, and I am black. And it concluded: As always, whitey now sits in judgement of me, preparing to cast my fate. It is your decision either to let me blow with the wind as a nonentity or to encourage the development of self. Allow me to prove my self." (p. 201) He was admitted in spite of the social activism and black rhetoric. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. was admitted to Yale University because his innate intellectual abilities had been stimulated and largely influenced by the intellectual environment and social activism of his home. Thanks to the early and continuous interventions of Pauline and Henry Gates.

Roland, Jerry, Rodney and Gates were the Fearsome Foursome. They were an awesome group of sixteen year-olds who founded the black consciousness cultural club. This club was of particular significance in the context of the racially mixed school that Gates and his friends attended. Tatum (1997) suggests that adolescent racial grouping is

often a developmental process growing out of the environmental stressor -- racism. "Joining with one's peers for support in the face of stress is a positive coping strategy." (ibid., p. 62) The social intimacy of the group allowed them to explore issues of adolescence and cultural identity, sexuality and racial politics. They were fearless as they boldly explored explosive issues and controversy among themselves and with Gates' father. Tatum (ibid) also posits that there are unique challenges facing adolescents of color such as discovering what it means to be Black in addition to discovering who you are as an individual. Because of these challenges, she suggests, they need to feel supported in their identity development. The camaraderie that Young Gates had with Roland, Jerry and Rodney helped him deal with issues of race, self esteem and achievement. The opportunities to be in the presence of supportive friends and family and to talk about issues of personal relevance was especially importance for young Gates and his friends for they attended integrated schools where Whites had a long history of denigrating and devaluing blacks. The forum of this support group provided opportunity for his father and members of the group as well to deflate any negative messages he might have picked up from his teachers, instructional materials or general school environment. The net effect of the group, the Fearsome Foursome, was an identity-affirming experience.

Identity-affirming experiences are necessary, argues Tatum, for black children operating in white environments. They serve as effective interventions that can help black children manage feelings of isolation that they so often feel in predominantly white schools. I feel safe in concluding that young Gates felt psychologically safe in the newly integrated schools of Piedmont. The psychological environment that his parents created, and the companionship of his comrades (The Fearsome Foursome) made it almost impossible for young Gates to fail. His autobiography does not report feelings of racial isolation, or racial inferiority. I rather suspect that the nurturance of his nuclear and extended family, the interventions of his mother at the school, and the closeness of his comrades created a sense of psychological safety that enabled him to excel in his school work.

Fordham's (1988) analysis of young black high achievers suggest that they often adopt a sense of racelessness and lack identification with members of the black community. Gates' memoirs suggests just the opposite. His experiences in a racially mixed high school found him establishing close associations with peers of his own racial and ethnic culture. The strong identification and attachment bonds established with members of the Fearsome Foursome allowed him to grapple with racial issues emerging within the school and on the national scene. His memoirs tell of vigorous debates that he had with his peers and father on such issues:

> So by the time I was sixteen, my buddies had adopted my daddy as their surrogate father, and the four of us would sit for hours arguing with Daddy and Mama, eating dinner, watching television, and arguing some more. Vietnam. Black Power, Dr. King, Stokely, Afros, the Panthers, the time of day. We'd fall asleep in my bedroom, the four of us, then get up and argue with the Old Man some more. We'd argue with Daddy for hours on end. (p. 187)

It appears that his membership in this black-consciousness club assisted his school success. He did not have to lose his racial identity to achieve academic success. His growing up experiences challenge Fordham's theory that black achievers must forfeit their racial identity in order to succeed in the academic arena.

Gates' explicit descriptions about several key teachers that inspired his scholarship are helpful in evaluating the extent of their influence on his school achievement. Gates recalls that he was blessed with "some dedicated and able teachers" like Mrs. Mellor and Mrs. Bell, who pushed and encouraged him. But, the one that stood out in his mind more than others, and that he devotes narrative comment to is Duke Anthony Whitmore, a college English teacher at Potomac State. "Words and thoughts, ideas and visions, came alive for me in his classroom. It was he who showed me, by his example, that ideas had a life of their own and that there were other professions as stimulating and as rewarding as being a doctor." (p. 194) It was the Duke that suggested and encouraged his transfer to an Ivy League school. And, it was the Duke who influenced a career change from medical

doctor to doctor of philosophy.

Ogbu's (1986) research findings on academic failure among African-American youth suggests that Gates' family's belief in education as the way-to-make-it might place him at risk for academic failure. According to Ogbu's findings the Gates' family's belief in education as a vehicle to achievement coupled with their high levels of race consciousness, and awareness of societal inequities might have resulted in academic failure for young Gates. It did not. Rather, it had the opposite effect - academic success. Ogbu's research fails to respond to how and in what ways Gates and other black families interpret the opportunity structure - - education as a holy grail, a ticket to freedom, an opportunity to lift the race. He fails to acknowledge this and the many sacrifices (i.e., his mother dropping out of junior high school to work and put four brothers through school, adopting the philosophical position that she and her husband would provide all that their sons would need to achieve) and interventions made by families to enable realization of this opportunity. Gates succeeded because his family was capable of envisioning and carrying out an effective and efficient plan for working within an educational system designed to discourage his success. His family manipulated the system to their advantage using the cultural capital of family, community and creativity - making a way-out-of-no-way.

The academic accomplishments of Henry Louis Gates, Jr. appear to have been influenced by multiple variables: his own intellectual prowess; the motivational processes employed by his parents; the powerfully black hegemonic influences resident within his nuclear and extended families, the identity affirming experiences of his adolescence, and the activities sponsored by the tiny colored-community of Piedmont. The cumulative effect was a powerful force, acting as a form of cultural capital, shielding him against the racial bigotry of a southern, Appalachian town. The dynamic interplay between these variables and the black hegemonic experiences of his youth significantly enhanced his school performance, and provided a vehicle for the expression of his innate intellectual abilities.

The research studies on factors that influence academic achievement in African-American children (Clark, 1983; Clark, 1991; Dweck, 1986; Murrary-Nettles 1991; and

Tatum, 1997) cited throughout this chapter support these conclusions. Community involvement; family and spiritual values; parent involvement: literacy activities, communication and dialogue between parent and child; and cultural support groups, are important dimensions of academic achievement. Gates' life story depicts aspects of each of these influencing dynamics.

Which of these dynamic variables, and in what relation to each other, had the greatest influence on the academic achievement of Henry Louis Gates, Jr.? The use of Labov's evaluative methods, and the critical writings and voice of Gates himself lead me to conclude his family's emphasis on educational values and their early interventions on his behalf were primary. His family, with deliberate forethought and love, created a psychological environment that affirmed his well being and his future academic successes. During their day-to-day experiences in the home environment they provided many and varied experiences that were foundational for mastery of such academic skills as reading, writing and thinking, skills requisite for school success. Development of these skills led to the emergence of adaptive type-behaviors (mastery of skills, risk-taking behaviors and goal orientation) that educators such as Dweck (1986) suggest are vital to school success. The purchase of supplemental items and instructional tools to support their son's at-home discoveries (i.e., learnings) also helped to extend important concepts learned in school, as did the rigorous and honest dialogue between father and son on contemporary issues important in their lives. And finally, his mother's social activism was an important aspect of his achievement. The times in which Gates' mom intervened at school, in the stores, and with her brothers on his behalf are not to be diminished. She served as his emissary, his ambassador if you will, battling the wars and fanning the flames that threatened to diminish or short change his chances for academic success. These interventions cause me to conclude that the active involvement of Pauline and Henry Gates had the greatest influence on his academic achievements.

Two other important variables, innate intelligence and extended family, combined with the involvement of his parents appeared to put him on a fast track toward academic success. The combination of these three variables created a powerful force that enabled

and eventually secured his success. Other variables of secondary importance were his religious faith from which emerged elements of the black-hegemonic traits of resilience and perseverance. A strong psychological attachment had developed between Young Gates and his mother. During her lengthy illness, he felt a sense of great loss as his mother became increasingly inaccessible to him. His religious faith appeared to help him cope with this traumatic experience, "the" crisis of his young life. The absence of a religious faith and belief in God would most likely have intensified the trauma, leaving him hopeless. Fortunately, his mother's hospitalization was brief, and the prescribed medication seemed to help her condition, increasing her accessibility to him. It appears that his faith sustained him during this very difficult period.

Important, but of tertiary value, were other variables such as his relationships with teachers and peers, and community-sponsored activities. Gates inclusion of his teachers and peers is important because he saw fit to include them in his autobiography. He devotes far fewer pages to these variables than he does to the dimensions of family and religious faith.

How and in what ways did Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and the other colored children of Piedmont, West Virginia matriculate through educational institutions and systems with histories of discriminatory practices? How and in what ways did young Gates and his friends manage to cope with white teachers who grew up in a culture that perpetuated images of blacks as inferior to Whites? How and in what ways did Young Gates and his friends manage to keep their cool when they experienced discriminatory practices that didn't allow them to enter academic competitions? I propose that the personal stories of Gates' lived experiences as expressed through his explicit writing and interpretive perspectives provide compelling and credible answers: a spiritual faith that provided comfort and sustenance during crisis; social activism; membership in community groups (e.g., the Fearsome Foursome) from which he drew needed support for coping with racism; family members (e.g., mom and dad and extended members of the Gates family) who dared to dream and envision a better life; family members who set standards of excellence for their children; family members who intervened on their children's behalf

in the school and larger social setting; family members who make personal and financial sacrifices for their children, and family members who communicated a sense of love and respect of their children.

Gates' story provides some answers to the larger questions posed in this dissertation: How is it that so many black children growing up in segregated communities were able to matriculate through racist educational institutions, systems, and classroom practices designed to disadvantage them? And, what is it that seems to have the greatest impact on the academic achievement of contemporary African-American children matriculating through integrated educational institutions, systems and classroom practices designed to disadvantage them?

The black-hegemonic influences of Gates' life such as emphasis on education as the way-to- make-it; the value and influence of family; the value and influence of community; spiritual beliefs; and political and social activism had certainly proved to be operative forces during Gates' school years. They sculpted, shaped, and influenced his academic motivations, his high academic performance and professional successes in later years. Gates provides the final interpretation is to what influenced him in his own words: "I am from and of a time and place--Piedmont, West Virginia--and that's a world apart, a world of difference. So this is not a story of a race but the story of a village, a family, and its friends. And of a sort of segregated peace." (pp. xv-xvi)

Chapter 6

Dr. Margaret Morgan Lawrence

Dreams of becoming a medical doctor shaped the life history and academic achievements of Dr. Margaret Morgan Lawrence (Margaret). As the only surviving child of Mary and Alonzo Morgan she had a fierce determination to become a doctor " in order to save a child like my brother from death." The events of his death, retold again and again, and the sorrow that consumed her family would become sustaining motivations for years to come as Margaret faced he hard work, discipline, and struggle of becoming a physician." Margaret's brother, Alonzo Morgan, Jr. (Candy Man), was the first born child of the Morgans. His unexpected death, at 11 months of age, of a congenital illness, devastated the household and "lingered there forever." Young Margaret grew up in the shadowy memories of a deceased brother whom she had never met, for whom her parents grieved. "Sadness moved with the Morgans from church to church, house to house . . . like a shadow . . . Each time they moved, Candy Man's picture would be hung in the central spot in the living room over the couch. From this lofty position Sandy Alonzo Morgan, Jr., would gaze down on the family. " (pp. 34-35) These interpretive comments of Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, daughter and co-writer of Margaret's autobiography,

establishes the tone and mood of the book. The unresolved trauma of her [Margaret] parents' loss and the degree to which it consumed their attention and energies appeared to have significantly influenced Margaret's professional ambitions. Margaret's autobiography records the following interpretive analysis:

"As a young determined child, she [Margaret] was also compelled by the irrational wish to do something that would secure her parents' love and devotion. I wanted to prevent his death for my mother and father. I thought, if I had been able to do that, look how they would have loved me' . . . Her wish to 'save babies' and gain her parents' undying affection also grew out of competition with her dead brother, the boy with the golden curls who was perfect in every way . . . I know what I wanted and I thought I could do it." (p. 72)

At age nine Margaret knew she wanted to become a doctor. Though becoming a medical doctor was a self-imposed goal; it was one that was fully encouraged and supported by her parents (Mary and Rev. Morgan).

Margaret spent most of her growing up years in the Deep South during the Pre-Civil Rights era.Her father, an itinerant Episcopal minister, moved the family from small rural town to small rural town until finally settling in Vicksburg, Mississippi in 1921 when Margaret was age seven. While blacks and whites in Vicksburg lived in the same community - on the same streets, they were separated by class more than by color; they were segregated in mind. The following memory is part of the Vicksburg script, typifying normal black/white relationships. Margaret remembers Elizabeth, a childhood friend whose family lived next door and with whom she played for several years. At age eleven Elizabeth announced to Margaret: "I can't play with you any more 'cause you're a nigger."

(p. 52) While this attitude and behavior were part of the southern culture, it did not serve as a deterrent to her dreams. Margaret offers the following interpretation of the nature and character of the southern culture of her early years:

There was something about the crossing of race and class that had determined the quality of her life. Margaret's voice is tentative as she tries to figure it out. 'I was in no way destroyed by racial separation . . . You were respected as belonging to your own class . . . There were these class tiers on either side. When you met, you met as upper-middle class whites . . . you lived your life all the time in your own group . . . you came together at the same class level . . . ' 'Poor blacks were a part of my life . . . My mother was a teacher whose mission it was to teacher every child . . . and my father was a minister who made a point of going among the poor." (p. 167)

Margaret makes no apology for growing up black, rather she reports with pride a strong sense of privilege. There were many: the privilege of having parents with respectable positions within the community (her father as Priest and school principal at St. Mary's church, and her mothers as one of the regular teachers at St. Mary's church); the privilege of traveling to New York every other summer to visit with her mother's side of the family; the privilege of taking large trunks of tailor-made dresses and suits; the privilege of having a reputation as a star student at Magnolia High; and the privilege of having the dream of one day becoming a medical doctor. Margaret had a strong and healthy sense of self esteem, growing up with her family in Vicksburg gave her a strong sense of self, "a strong feeling about myself," says Margaret. These experiences gave her a strong sense of self-agency. This sense of agency also emerged from the independence and autonomy her parents allowed. "The mother's trust of her daughter's judgement, allowed her much more

freedom than most Vicksburg mothers, and may have even enjoyed her daughter's daring spirit" (p. 65). Margaret's reflections reveal the behaviors that grew from her mother's permissiveness:"I would dare to do things that other girls wouldn't. I never had to wish to offend by doing something terrible . . . I was just going about life responding to challenges." (Ibid.)

Mary appeared to have a great deal of admiration for Margaret, a respect and deference that sometimes made Margaret feel like a third adult in the Morgan family. "Both her mother and father took Margaret seriously, never doubted her career decisions, and responded fully when she made requests." (p. 237) Margaret appeared to have a strong spirit and a firm sense of self-agency, inspired by her parents' permissiveness, but also her family legacy.

A legacy of achievement was an integral part of her surround, directly and indirectly influencing the achievement behaviors of young Margaret. Members of her extended family on both sides held high expectations for their children as did Margaret's parents for her. Both her mother and father were accomplished and educated professionals. Her father had completed high and normal schools, and had earned a Seminary degree from Bishop Payne Divinity School, an Episcopal Seminary for Negroes in Petersburg, Virginia. Her mother was a graduate of Richmond Colored High and Normal School; Margaret described her as a dedicated and caring teacher. Both parents came from middle-class accomplished and educated families. Mary, Margaret's mother, was one of three Smith girls - - "Maria Ann, Mary Elizabeth, and Margaret Hazel - were beautiful women, valued for their white skin and 'good hair.' In Richmond, Virginia, the Smith girls walked with pride; they dressed well, excelled in school, and joined the right society clubs, gathering

places where the 'black bourgeoisie' of Richmond came for tea, conversation, and occasional demure parties. Both Marie Ann and Mary Elizabeth became schoolteachers, and Margaret Hazel . . . went to seek respectable work in New York City." (p. 21) While her father's growing up years were a bit more humble than Mary's (his father died when he was very young leaving his mother to work as a church custodian to support her three children), he was influenced by a mother who "deeply valued education, dignity and decorum in her children, and insisted through her will and energetic example that they become upstanding citizens. Sandy [Rev. Morgan] felt the responsibility of her message, and so did his older sister Hattie, who became a teacher, and Leah, who married a successful lawyer and gained status through him. 'By being an Episcopal minister he got a good deal of respect from his family' . . . Aunt Hattie and Aunt Leah both expressed great pride in their brother's chosen vocation." (p. 32)

Margaret's parents brought this legacy of black achievement, and black-historic perspective on education as the way-to-make-it to their union, and most significantly to their parental relationship with Margaret. The importance of education was embedded in the fabric of her family's lives. Her mother's and father's educational achievements affirmed its importance.

Early on Margaret showed signs of high scholarship; her mother, the teacher, taught her to read at the age of three. By contemporary standards the act and skill of reading at age three are considered exceptionally phenomenal given that educators and developmental specialists have identified age six as the "normal time period" in which most children learn to read (Berk, 1996). This norm helps to place two facts in appropriate context: 1) her innate intellectual ability and prowess; and 2) her mother's role in establishing a learning

process that would eventually assist her in acquiring the necessary " adaptive behaviors" requisite for eventual school success (Dweck). By observing her mother she learned the role of a "good" student early on: goal-orientation and single-minded purpose; discipline and skills for goal attainment; and the social interactions that sustain good student-teacher relationships. This early learning was reinforced and rewarded throughout her schooling.

Margaret's reflections include the knowledge that she knew, early on, that she was smart and capable. Margaret reports that "early in her life she had stood out as a successful student - - the kind of child that teachers grab onto in order to make them feel effective and competent." (pp. 82-83) She seems to have had an industrious, persistent and enthusiastic approach to learning, all attributes that research suggests (Chapman & Skinner, 1989; Ruble, Eisenberg, & Higgins, 1994) are part of a mastery-oriented nature. Children who are mastery-oriented believe their successes are due to ability - - a characteristic they can count on when faced with risks and new challenges. Margaret appeared to have a mastery-oriented nature; the stories of her life depict such.

Margaret conveys other images of her mother's academic influence on her life. She recalls vivid and fond memories of her mother as a literate person who performed dramatic readings throughout the community. Known throughout Vicksburg for them, she would read at church gatherings and at community events and functions held at the local YMCA. "Mother's dramatic readings were *very* emotional. She used to recite with music . . . 'The Lost Chord' . . . I can see her now: 'Seated one day at the organ' . . . the music rolling, her chest heaving . . . I can still see the cover of the tan and maroon sheet music she used . . . Another one she loved to do was 'My little blue-eyed Luisa, I loved her so well." (p. 113) Mary left an indelible memory on her daughter as an able, competent reader and performer.

Other impressionable memories young Margaret had of her mother. Mary, focused on her professional career and the commitment and aggressiveness that she brought to teaching. She evaluates her mother's actions through the following words: "You *had* to learn with my mother . . . She was a very involved teacher . . . there was never a slow learner for my mother . . . She stayed late if somebody was having trouble learning something. Sometimes she'd put a book under her pillow and see if she could dream about the best way to teach some arithmetic lesson that somebody was having trouble with." (p. 39) She was devoted to her profession; she was devoted to teaching. While teaching, she seemed to Margaret to be spirited, charismatic, demanding and strong. These images of the professional side of her mother were strong and influential in Margaret's life; they helped to influence her academic successes.

However, Margaret reflects that this was "the" only area in her life that she seemed to be devoted to. "Nowhere else did she seem as alive as she was in the classroom -- outgoing, demanding, and strong. This reticent woman would transform herself into a spirited, charismatic teacher." (p. 39) In other aspects of her life, Mary was inhibited, withdrawn, and basically not accessible to her family, neither Margaret nor her husband. One of the great challenges of Margaret's growing up years was her perception that her mother was emotionally inaccessible to her. She remembers her mother as always in the bed facing the wall, as forever depressed, isolated and lonely. Mary was angry at her husband for taking her away from her family, friends and comfortable life. She had grown up in a large-close knit female dominated family in the large city of Richmond, Virginia. Her family led an active social life that included membership in Richmond's black bourgeois society. Marriage to an itinerant Episcopal minister changed her life completely. She became

increasingly distraught with feelings of isolation and loneliness as she and her new husband sojourned in and out of tiny towns, far away from family and the creature comforts she had become accustomed to.

During the first seven years of their marriage they moved from tiny rural town to tiny rural town. From Fayetteville, North Carolina to Portsmith, Virginia to Widewater, Mississippi to Mound Bayou, Mississippi. They spent a maximum of 12 to 18 months in each place before finally settling in Vicksburg, Mississippi, a town of some size with a population of 20,000 (in 1921). "Each of the moves had disastrous effects on her energy and spirit." (p. 36) By the time they reached Vicksburg her marital relationship had detiorated. In a rage about the lost of her connection to her mother and sisters, she went into fits of rage and depression. The conflict that ensued between husband and wife was reflected in constant fighting, bickering, and name calling. Mary became dysfunctional for long periods of time, often in bed with her face to the wall for weeks. She was unable to function as a wife and marital partner. And, unable to function as a mother as well; mother-daughter interaction suffered. Margaret remembers: "My father had no experience whatsoever with rural living and neither had my mother . . . I don't know how long she stayed in bed. I remember there was a living room near the front door, a dining room, and steps going upstairs to the bedrooms. I remember going up the steps when I was three years old, knowing my mother was in that room, and I wouldn't go in. She was like dead and I was too scared to go in." (p. 37) Members of the church community came in to help Rev. Morgan's sickly wife, cooking, cleaning and caring for his daughter. Margaret remembers them filling the big hole that her mother's psychological absence left. They filled the house with all the ingredients missing: warmth, comfort, talk and laughter. "They

were good people," remembers Margaret.

Reverend Morgan, however, had a strong presence in his daughter's life. His active and continuous involvement in his daughter's life provided the focus on family that is so often a black- hegemonic trait found in families of academically successful children. Reverend Morgan's continued involvement and interaction with his daughter sustained the efficacy of the family, his daughter's continued maturation, and the development of resilience, a black-hegemonic trait. He took care of his daughter, making breakfast for her, preparing her for school, and taking her along with him as her administered his ministerial duties. Though his wife had abandoned him emotionally, he did not in turn abandon Margaret, nor did she him. Her social-emotional development, while affected, appeared not to be compromised. Her father attended to her well-being, was responsive and had her to accompany him as he continued to work during stressful periods. Margaret, in turn was responsive to him; she loved him dearly, "to the point of distraction."

Fortunately, for Margaret, the attachment between father and daughter nurtured the development of ego-strength, ensuring her growing emotional development, and partial resolution of the emotional conflict residing within their home. Both Margaret and her father felt some degree of anger and frustration toward Mary and the sadness and depression that consumed her. But, they had a healthy sense of who they were, and didn't allow Mary's illness to consume them. Because the love between father and daughter was so great, and the bonding so strong, a reciprocal spirit of responsive care, give and take emerged. Just as her father cared for her; she care for him. "She felt compelled to be vigilant and sensitive to her father's needs. She had special antennae to pick up her father's every move and motive." (p. 56) Margaret reports that she was very much aware

of her father all the time. The reason she was so attentive to her father was that her mother "seemed irresponsible toward his work," and she wanted to fill in and compensate for her mother's absence. The strong bond between father and daughter seemed to build a sense of resilience that enabled her to cope with the trauma of a mother that seemed dysfunctional most of the time.

Research on stress-resistant children point out several factors that might have protected young Margaret from maladjustive behaviors as described in Garmezy's, (1983) research:

High self-esteem and mastery-oriented behaviors. Margaret had both of these. Her father's attentiveness and sustained involvement with his daughter, served to let her know that she was special. She thought herself privileged because of her parents' respected positions in the community, and her travels to New York every other summer with her mother. These parent-child engagements and models of being in the world helped her to adjust to the trauma of her mother's depression.

A Church community that provided surrogate mothering through their warmth, compassion, caring, talk and laughter. These conditions helped to buffer the trauma of having a mother who was physically present, but psychologically unavailable (unless she was involved in the act of teaching or visiting her family in New York). *A father who developed a special relationship with his daughter, offering a support system and a positive model for* coping with her mother's depression and psychological distance.

Margaret was fortunate to benefit from the respite type care her father provided as a result of his emotionally presence. Her father's continued involvement with her and his ministerial works provided Margaret with a model of engagement that provided the strong message that one could manage and master life's challenges without allowing

them to be all consuming.

These factors helped Margaret to cope with her mother's illness and emotional isolation. The outcome was adaptive behaviors that allowed her to continue on the road toward social-emotional maturity, and to simultaneously perform well in the world of school and academia.

As Rev. Morgan ministered to the needs of the community Margaret witnessed his social and intellectual skills, and the manner in which he reached out to people touching and influencing their spiritual lives; he had a *feeling sense*, a sense that she observed and recognizes as evident in her own professional work as a child psychiatrist. This powerful sense of responsive caring was nurtured in her as she watched her father administer it to the people he ministered to. And, it provided a model for her as she spent her growing up years dealing with her mother's depression.

Issues of color arose between Mary and Rev. Morgan. Mary had grown up in a family of fair-skinned females. Mom Margaret, Mary's mother, had raised her three daughters to "believe in their beauty and to appreciate the status their light skin afforded them." (p. 43) Mary brought these values into her marital relationship, and used them in fits of frustration and anger to denigrate her husband whose skin color was of a darker hue. Young Margaret who was of the same color as her father, picked up on these negative expressions. However, it was another variable that solidified her identification with her father. "I very much identified with him . . . everyone told me I looked like him." (ibid.) Color continued to be an issue as Mary experienced her mother's anxiety over living in southern towns. Her mother had listened to her Mound Bayou neighbors' warnings and carried them with her to Vicksburg. If it was unsafe for her fair-skinned mother to be with her dark-skinned

father, what might happen if she and her mother ventured out together on the Vicksburg streets? I recognized that I was like my father -- that I was the same color or close . . . I recognized that for me to be with my mother was almost as bad for my mother to be with him. I was frightened because she was frightened." (p. 46) Margaret's retrospective analysis helps usto understand one of the emotional dilemmas of her life. Rev. Morgan had mastery-oriented attributes (Chapman & Skinner, 1989) just as Margaret did. He was fearless, believing that he could and would succeed because he was able, not because of luck or chance. Young Margaret benefitted from his strength of self, for she didn't perceive of him as being afraid of white people. "Certainly I didn't think of him as having the fears my mother did." (p. 47) The Reverend depended on his own faith and belief in God, on his abilities and character to carry him successfully into every experience, and he didn't expect his experiences in Vicksburg to be any different than in Mound Bayou or Widewater. His confidence was picked up by Margaret, saving her from being consumed by her mother's fears of being in the company of Whites.

"I began to have an image of a white person who is respectful of my father. My father would ask for what he wanted. I think I began to take in this idea . . . Here are people who have . . . If you don't have what you need, you can ask for it. In asking respectfully (not begging or backing off), one had to begin with an assumption of human equality." (p. 51) To Margaret her father was eloquent and authoritative. Margaret was learning very valuable lessons that would prove helpful in the future as she chose to complete her secondary education in the North, thousands of miles away from home. Her identification and associations with her father paid off as she sought the emotional support and financial assistance to complete her secondary and college-level schooling.

Rev. Morgan was a learned man. He had completed high and normal school and graduated from an Episcopal seminary for Negroes in Petersburg, Virginiaa. He was an optimistic, adventurous and ambitious man who was committed to ministering to the spiritual lives of Negroes in the Deep South. This ambition and commitment led him and his family to and through many tiny rural towns before settling on Vicksburg where he was very hopeful about the "great possibilities for building a lively and rewarding church community." (p. 45)

Margaret had a religiously spiritual life, a black-hegemonic trait, that sustained her during periods of stress and challenge. While living with her parents, "life . . . centered on home, school, and church; the boundaries between these worlds were fluid, creating a seamless like existence." (p. 49) Margaret's experiences are explained by the research findings of Paris (1995), who argues that "African spirituality is integrally connected with the dynamic movement of life." (p. 22) Margaret learned to feel and trust this spirit as "a strong presence in her life . . . She prayed regularly and sought comfort and strength from this source. Psalm 27 was taught to her by her father . . . 'The Lord is my light and salvation . . . be of good courage he taught me to read this Psalm just before my examinations. You had to study for exams, but you also read that Psalm. I had a sense of being in touch with the Spirit, Lord Jesus God . . . and I expected a response." (p. 61) Margaret's reflections revealed that she felt she had invoked help. Her testimony is that she felt supported by the Spirit when she was challenged by life's obstacles.

It was here in Vicksburg that Margaret's formal education began. Her father was minister at St. Mary's Episcopal church and principal of its school. Her mother was one of its teachers. They influenced the instructional pedagogy and educational policy that

enabled she and other Negro children to succeed.

Margaret performed well in school. She was a precocious student doing well, excelling in Math and English. At age 12, two years ahead of others her age, she had finished the Vicksburg Industrial School and entered Magnolia High School as a Freshman; "her reputation as a star student had been established." She held a great deal of respect for her favorite teachers Mr. Bowman (Math) and Miss Cox (English). "I was young and I was smart, and nobody seemed to mind that. I didn't get in anybody's space." (p.83) This same respect was given her by her classmates.

While Margaret had adopted many of her father's traits, she also had a number of traits that resembled her mother's. She was single-minded in goal attainment; thoroughly engaged and involved in her work; and she was concrete, active, quiet and caring. All qualities that she observed in her mother as she participated in what she loved the most, teaching. Margaret took note of these qualities and incorporated them into the adaptive behaviors that eventuated in her academic successes.

The same types of adaptive behaviors she had learned from her mother during elementary school remained operative throughout her junior and senior high school years. Self discipline; academic skills required to complete a task competently, and social interactions that sustain good student-teacher relationships combined together to assist her academic success in junior high and secondary school environments.

As an only child, Margaret spent a great deal of time alone. She recalls spending " long periods of time with no one to talk to but herself . . . 'I walked to school, across town to the railroad tracks, up the railroad tracks to Cherry Street . . . A long way, at least three miles, probably more . . . Thinking about everything under the sun' . . . Her mind turned

back on itself and built elaborate, embellished narratives." (p. 58) While she enjoyed the solitude, she was introspective. She used it to imagine, ruminate, think about, and plan a path that would eventually result in the accomplishment of her life's dream. Her desire to become a medical doctor had not changed over the years. The goal that she had chosen for herself at age nine remained her goal at age fourteen. She still wanted to be a doctor to save children's lives, to save babies, and to gain her parents' affections; they still grieved for Candy Man. Her quiet times allowed her to develop a plan for accomplishing her goal of becoming a doctor.

Motivated by her determination to pursue a better education, she reasoned that a good high school education would lead to a better college, which would result in her admission to medical school. It was logical, then that she should transfer to a northern high school. Margaret's desire to fulfill her dream was so great that she wanted to position herself in the academic world so that she could successfully compete for admission into medical school. Her parents gave Margaret a great deal of autonomy and responsibility to make decisions about her life. Margaret had learned from many years of observing her father "how to ask for what you want," and how to do so in an authoritative manner. So when she announced her plan to complete high school up North, her mother and father immediately took her seriously. They asked no questions, didn't doubt the soundness of her decision, no question her rationale; they simply accepted her decision. She after all was an independent thinker, not an incorrigible child. Their position was, "Margaret wants to go." They held a high regard for their daughter, and for her opinions. Margaret reports, "I announced it to my folks . . . and that was that." "Mary had great admiration for Margaret, a respect and deference that sometimes made Margaret feel like a third adult in the Morgan family. Both

her mother and father took Margaret seriously, never doubted her career decisions, and responded fully when she made requests." (p. 237) So when her principal and favorite teacher, Mr. Bowman, attempted to advise otherwise, her parents sided with her supporting what they recognized as her thoughtful opinion.

Margaret left the South at age fourteen to complete high school in New York. She "remembers feeling a sense of responsibility, because if I made the decision, I had to live with it." (p.81) The move represented the beginning of her formal journey toward becoming a physician. It alsoprovides personal critique of a central factor that influenced her academic life: her own personalmotivations and initiatives.

The distance meant that she would seldom see her parents, in summers, every other year because of the cost. Though Mary was always sad and withdrawn she would miss her daughter, she had always believed in her daughter, and held great admiration and respect for her. Both her parents would miss her. They had a deep loyalty and an unwavering belief in her that gave Margaret the solid and sure foundation to venture off and explore her educational ambitions. Margaret would miss her parents. But, she was willing to endure the loneliness so that she could accomplish her single-minded dream, a medical career. She missed them, even though she had made the decision to "get a first class education in New York."

Margaret resided with her extended family members in New York; her grandmother Mom Margaret, Aunt Hazel and Uncle Andrew all resided in one apartment. They did not encourage or support Margaret's fierce independence in the same way that her parents did. They were anxious about the care of someone else's daughter, expending a great deal of time and energy attempting to protect and contain Margaret. Often they attempted to

discourage her ambition by suggesting that she would get married instead of becoming a doctor. Single-minded Margaret did not allow their low expectations to get in the way or impede her dreams. She was bound for medical school, anda career as a physician. Her aunts, however, did show sufficient support by conducting the necessary research for the best school for their bright niece from the South. Wadleigh, a classical and academic girls' school, was chosen for its academic excellence and because of its close proximity to their home in Harlem.

In order to gain admission to Wadleigh all applicants had to take and pass both achievement tests and departmental exams. For the first time in her academic life Margaret did poorly. Academic tests which required timed and rapid responses did not fit well with her slow, thoughtful and methodological learning style. She was accustomed to thinking about questions, mulling over thoughtful responses. She did, however, fare well on the departmental examinations. She scored high in English and mathematics, the subjects in which she had been well trained at Vicksburg's Magnolia High. The English teachers were impressed with her essay; the school admitted her based on the scores of her departmental examinations. Her English and mathematics scores were so high that she was exempted from taking any more English while enrolled at Wadleigh. During her two-year stay at Wadleigh she experienced similar success with her mathematics test and was given permission to take intermediate algebra.

While at Wadleigh she excelled as she had at Magnolia. She was a member of the honor society and took such rigorous subjects as Greek and Latin. In this girls' academic high school, scholarly achievement was rewarded publicly and revered by both faculty and students. Decorated with ribbons and medals for her achievements by concerned teachers,

she was at the "center of her teachers' gaze." This would prove helpful when she eventually prepared to enter college and later medical school. Margaret's decision to leave the south and seek out and attend a school that was more academically competitive was working out. She was sure that she had made the correct decision, one that would ultimately result in her admission to medical school, and the accomplishment of her dream to become a doctor.

Margaret had a good number of resources that she could call upon as she met the challenges of living away from her parents in a more integrated and challenging environment. She had a spiritual faith in God that had worked well in times past. It served as a foothold to anchor her when dealing with her mother's depression and emotional isolation. It was a form of cultural capital that she could call on in the future as she faced whatever challenges lay ahead. Her father had taught her how to pray; he had taught her the pragmatics of using scripture during examinations and other times of struggle. Since it had worked well for her in Vicksburg, she had the added advantage of recognizing it as a coping skill she could "invoke" as needed. Her experiences at home would enable her to create the same "seamless existence" where the boundaries between home, school and work were fluid. Another resource that she carried with her to New York was a sense of privilege. She seldom felt the pains of racism because her sense of privilege was so strong. She felt privileged as mentioned in earlier pages of this chapter because her parents held respectable positions within the Vicksburg community; because she traveled to New York every other summer, and because she was a good student. Black children living during this era of American history didn't ordinarily experience this level of privilege. Usually people were inhibited and confined by nature of their race, class and socio-economic status.

She also had the advantage of a peer support group. Although Wadleigh was predominantly white with an all white teaching staff, and large white student body; it also had a strong black presence, one third of each class was Negro. Margaret remembers spending "each day with her friends, Mary, Eunice, and Olivia, in school, in church, on adventures in the city" (p. 90). These three friends kept Margaret busy and helped her to deal with multiple issues: adolescence and a growing sense of identity; attending a predominantly white school where all the teaching and administrative staff were white - an at risk situation for Negroes since whites often attempt to reinforce notions of White superiority (Tatum, 1997); living with aunts who constantly communicated their doubts that she would ever become a doctor; and the pains of loneliness she experienced being away from her parents and home community of Vicksburg. It was a helpful group that supported her adolescent development, and more than likely her academic performance, especially since they all went to the same private "all girls" school. Tatum (Ibid.), educational psychologist, suggests that the academic performance of Black Youth benefits from the support of peers in whose company they feel psychologically safe. Tatum argues that in racially mixed settings (such as Wadleigh), racial groupings (like the one Margaret participated in), are a developmental process in response to environmental stressors such as racism. Joining with one's peers, suggest Tatum, can be a positive coping strategy. In Margaret's case, I conclude that in addition to fun; it also served the function of helping her to cope with the stresses of being in a white-dominated school setting. The peer group helped to mitigate the racial insults that are persistent experiences for Blacks involved in white institutions, and most assuredly were a part of the white culture during this era of American history.

Rev. Alonzo Morgan was proud and supportive of his daughter's decision to travel North to finish her high school education. Though she was out of sight, she was not out of mind. He remained actively involved in his daughter's education by making connections that would support her adjustment and academic development. His actions were like those of an architect, designing and crafting out her experiences. He was well aware that his daughter would benefit from a community of support to help her accomplish her ambitions. So before she departed Vicksburg, her father began an intervention process that established connections that would ease Margaret's transition and promote her social and academic development. He wrote to his colleague, Rev. John Johnson, requesting that he watch over his daughter while she attended school in Harlem. In this capacity Rev. Johnson forged a community of black support, black-female mentors-Negro Ladies of Harlem, that would inspire and sustain her aspirations during her high-school experiences.

"Most of the women who influenced Margaret were teachers - - master teachers with commanding reputations in the community. Their encouragement cast a light over Margaret's life. Just knowing them seemed to make dreams come alive. With these dreams set on medicine, Margaret was particularly overjoyed to meet Dr. Mae Chinn, a leading physician in Harlem . . . As I remember these women they seem larger than life." (p. 89)

Rev. Johnson also introduced her to Negro mentors, Miss Melva Price, and Miss Lucille Spence, both high school teachers of the classics and English, respectively. Invitations were extended to her for teas, to attend dramas, and to their homes for conversation. Rev. Johnson provided a much needed service, making connections between young aspiring and accomplished Negroes. "Margaret felt chosen, supported,

and challenged by these impressive women. These Negro ladies had a tremendous effect on me . . . They were learned, with a concern for you as a person . . . Somehow if you were a good student, you managed to meet these Negro teachers. Such women had a great sense of responsibility to the next generation in this black community, and they sought out and nurtured talent through personal connection. The ladies were so consciously concerned about Negro girls in an otherwise white environment . . . When they put a finger on you, they were saying, You have an opportunity." (p. 88) Findings from Tatum's research concludes that opportunities for black students to come together in the company of supportive adults allows them to talk about issues that might hinder their academic performance. The network of support created by her father and Rev. Johnson through the Negro ladies, advanced and guaranteed her academic development. Margaret reports that she "revered them and wanted to emulate them in her own life." Young Margaret received further encouragement, through her association with them, for her own professional aspirations. "The ladies were so consciously concerned about Negro girls in an otherwise white environment." (p.88)

The Negro ladies of Harlem took seriously their calling. They were symbols of knowledge, grace, truth, and African-American achievement in the community. They reached out to women such as Margaret, young women who had the demonstrated capacity to achieve. They sought to nurture, support and undergird their aspirations. So Margaret was not alone. She kept company with an impressive community of Negro girl friends who were as eager to achieve and goal directed as she was. Each of them was on a fast track toward success. Margaret kept company with Negro mentors that were accomplished and distinguished in their own right. They too were eager; they had an infectious enthusiasm

for young aspiring Negro girls. They were eager toencourage, to share, to network and be resourceful. For an investment of time in such young ladies was like an investment in the Negro race.

These mentor affiliations served as a form of cultural capital. They are not a new phenomena in the African-American community. Bates and Hudson (1996), authors of Basic Black: Home Training for Modern Times, suggests that mentor affiliations and Black-Greek associations have served a historical function for the black community. "They contributed to the strength and success of the African-American community by instilling a sense of heritage, fierce determination, and striving for excellence." (p. 47) In doing so they helped to protect young black achievers like Margaret from the psychological assault of racism. Edelman's (1992) comments support the historical existence of mentor groups, and the significant role they played in the development of her socio-cultural perspective and academic development:

> Many of my mentors and role models, such as Dr. Benjamin Mays, then president of Morehouse College, Whitney Young, dean of the School of Social Work at Atlanta University and later National Urban League head, M. Carl Holman, a professor at Clark College, later head of the National Urban Coalition, Dr. Howard Thurman, dean of the Chapel at Boston University, and Dr. King, all conveyed the same message as they spoke in Sisters Chapel at Spelman: education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it .(p. 9)

The Negro ladies who mentored Margaret served the same purposes mentioned by Bates and Hudson, and Edelman; their relationship with Margaret allowed them to improve someone else's life, thereby improving the Negro race. Other benefits of the mentor group

included linking her to African-American heritage; and African-American community development. The mentorship relationship which exists in most African-American communities is consistent with Paulo Freire's (1995) problem-posing education model of education. Freire espouses education as the practice of freedom where teachers and students act as critical thinkers, motivated toward not only their own liberation or upward mobility, but that of everyone. The intended outcomes of African-American mentorship groups is not dissimilar; "it is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it." (Edelman, p. 10) Margaret was quite fortunate that her father set the wheels in motion for her make these essential connections.

Thanks to the concern of her father, and his refusal to relinquish his parenting responsibilities, Margaret experienced the comfortable surround of a community of goal-directed and educated N egroes with whom she developed memorable acquaintances. "Their proud, determined images were etched in her mind." They affirmed positive definitions of self as an African American. The memories of which would comfort her as she would later feel the sharp pangs of discrimination upon attempting, unsuccessfully, to enter Cornell University's medical school.

Rev. Johnson was also an Episcopal minister and pastor of St. Martin Church in Harlem. He served as an authority figure in the absence of her father. Margaret came to appreciate his "delegated authority," one that was never abused and seldom used. He was a symbolic resource, a psychological connection to her father, whom she missed sorely. In addition, his church which she attended served as a haven for her. Now, in addition to the religious faith and spiritual resources she had brought with her to New York, she had a cadre of friends and mentors that represented a solid foundation for study and academic

achievement. Through their guidance and support she would be protected from any abuses or maltreatment she might suffer at the hands of whites, or as a direct result of any racist institutional policies she might experience.

From afar, her father, Rev. Morgan, had provided a shield of protection for his daughter's grand dreams and ambitions. She wanted to achieve; and he wanted her to do so under the protective eye of a community of caring, invested Negroes who would fiercely protect his young, ambitious daughter. Bates and Hudson (1996) suggest that mentors are especially valuable "in places where there are few people of color; it can help to acclimate a young brother or sister to the corporation's culture and mores . . . Each one, teach one." (p. 27) Miss Melva Price, Miss Lucille Spence, and Dr. Mae Chinn served this purpose.

Having a protective environment established, Young Margaret went on to achieve at Wadleigh. Her studies were kept on course by the fierce and caring direction of the dean who had guided her with a firm hand. "I did what I was told to do," she reports. Margaret recalls Miss Anna Pearl MacVay, who was the dean and her Greek tutor. Several times a week Margaret met with the dean in her office to read Greek. She orchestrated Margaret's schedule and study plans, making sure that all of her requirements were fulfilled for high school graduation. Applications for college admission and educational fellowships were submitted on a timely basis.

Margaret reports that all of the teachers cared, intently, like Dean MacVay. They all were interested in advancing the work of students who demonstrated high levels of competence. As she matriculated through school, received ribbons and awards, she could see her own dreams converge with their efforts. "I had the feeling that is what happened when you came to New York." Her dreams, her plans were becoming a reality. She had

chosen well, had made the right decision. She was on her way to college, to medical school - on her way to becoming a doctor.

Margaret graduated Wadleigh with academic distinction. Top prizes in Greek and Latin were awarded her upon graduation, plus a full academic scholarship to Cornell University. For the first time in her educational history she was to be the *only* black student. There was no strong black presence in the hallowed halls of Cornell. Margaret would have to go it alone. She would have to be resilient and persevere in order to meet with the many challenges that lay before her. She did persevere; she was resilient, but as a direct result of her personal ambitions, and the many familial, community, spiritual supports she had experienced during her growing up years. It would be many more years before she became a physician, completing her medical studies at Columbia Medical School, but she did. She fulfilled her life's ambition, to become a medical doctor.

The academic accomplishments of Dr. Margaret Morgan Lawrence appear to have been strongly influenced by multiple variables: her own innate intelligence and prowess; her mastery-oriented attributes such as complete concentration and goal-directed behavior; black hegemonic traits such as a spiritual belief in God, belief in education as the way-to-make-it, community involvement, and family influences. Which of these dynamic variables, and in what relation to each other had the greatest influence on Margaret's high academic performance? Sara, Margaret's daughter and collaborative writer, provides a partial answer. She suggests that her mother's personal capacity for "complete concentration" was one of her primary survival strategies. Margaret's own reflections on the ways in which she was like her mother support this theory. Margaret mentioned several times throughout the pages of the biography that she was like her mother in her

single-minded purpose. "I was like my mother thoroughly involved in my work." This ability to remain focused, to concentrate is an important skill for learning. Findings from research studies on school achievement (Chapman & Skinner, 1989; Ruble, Eisenberg, & Higgins, 1994) indicate that this ability is commonly found in high achievers. Goal-directed behavior is also one of the attributes of high achievers. Margaret's self-initiated goal of becoming a medical doctor, her announcement that she was going to New York to complete her high school education are examples of behavior and attitudes that predisposed her to educational attainment.

Family conflict, a mother who was emotionally withdrawn, forced her into adult-like behaviors relatively early. Because her mother was not always psychologically accessible, Margaret was left on her own to make decisions and engage in independent behaviors from which emerged high levels of autonomy and self-directed behaviors. These circumstances coupled with Margaret's innate intelligence and familial and community support created a powerful learning dynamic that contributed to her school success. The black-hegemonic trait of *spirituality and a belief in God* was certainly an important variable in promoting academic development. It seemed to dovetail very nicely with her ambitious goal of becoming a physician. The road to completion would be very long, and she would need something to sustain her during the years of sacrifice and struggle. Her father taught her how to use biblical text (i.e., Psalm 27) to assist in her studies and preparation for exams. She found the method helpful while in Vicksburg, and in New York as well where she continued her religious life at St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Harlem.

Community involvement as a black hegemonic trait was an operative variable in the success equation of Margaret's life. The Black Ladies who served as mentors, encouraging

and supporting her scholarship and excellence augmented the learning process already begun years earlier. However, the lateness of its appearance should not be diminished. One cannot predict the power and influence of mentor-type programs for African-American youth in predominantly white schools. History is replete with tales of black youth who became discouraged in secondary educational settings that discriminated against them through unfair educational policy and practice. The role that the mentoring Black Ladies played was important. The served as a linkage to her family and cultural heritage; as surrogate parents, protectors and gatekeepers; as models of African-American achievement; and finally as support for any civil or cultural crisis that might arise. Black community involvement played an important role; it helped to sustain and elevate the academic process inspired years ago by her parents.

Family as a dimension of Black Hegemony was operative during her growing up years. Mary and Alonzo represent Margaret's immediate family. Though there were marital difficulties, strained relationships, and psychotic-like behaviors (e.g., mothers constant sadness and withdrawal) Margaret's school achievements appeared to be inspired by her parents' professional behaviors with her. Mary was interactive and psychologically in tune when she was teaching. Those are the times in which Margaret noted her mother's strengths, her love for and intense passion for teaching. She was impressed with the intensity of her mother's commitment to working with every child, with the lengths that she would go to reach a child who hadn't as yet understood a concept (i.e., sleeping with math book under her pillow in hopes of finding an appropriate instructional strategy). On these occasions Margaret was very observant and deeply influenced by her mother's professional commitment and dedication. While Margaret's involvement with her mother

was limited, it was no less powerful. Margaret learned academic skills (reading at age three) and disciplines (goal-directed behaviors and concentration) from her mother that influenced her school success. Mary had sufficient interaction with Margaret to impress upon her the skills that she would need to succeed on her long trek toward medicine. She also saw in her mother's professional behaviors a commitment to education. She learned through observation, that there was no child that her mother wouldn't teach. The message was: education is important. It is a priority in my mother's life, one that she would pull her from the dungeons of despair and isolation.

Her father was a family man. He interacted with his daughter and involved her in his ministerial career. From this participation she learned how to handle herself with whites, how to make reasonable request with authority and grace. These learned skills assisted her as she worked with the all white faculty and administration at Wadleigh. It helped her to maneuver, with relative ease through the administrative maze of Wadleigh, and to obtain the requisite financial support she needed to attend Cornell University on a full scholarship.

Rev. Morgan served a very important function as he made connections to ensure Margaret's academic success in New York. He guided and directed her path toward success by linking her with key persons that were caring, skilled and knowledgeable about issues facing Negro girls in integrated-school settings. He knew that she needed other sources of capital (i.e., linkage with one's heritage and successful Negro role models) to sustain her journey through medical school. This single act of parenthood, was a stroke of brilliance, almost guaranteeing his daughter's school success.

The net effect was that Margaret's continued academic success was secured. She

arrived in New York, at the age of 14, equipped with an enormous amount of cultural capital. She had a seamless religious, spiritual and home life; she had connections with a mentoring group whose primary function was to "consciously help ambitious Negro girls"; she had an innate intellectual process, and personal ambition; she had Negro peers with whom she interacted and affirmed her identity as a black female in positive manners; and she had family who respected, admired and supported her. Margaret could do little else but achieve. As Swidler (1986, p. 273) would surmise, Margaret had a " . . . tool-kit of symbols, rituals, and world views, which people [Margaret] use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems." Margaret experienced a large measure of profit from these forms of capital as demonstrated through heracademic achievements of her high school and collegiate years.

Each of these variables was important. How they interacted with each other, and to what degree is a question difficult to determine. However, what is evident is that the dynamic interplay between them produced a high achiever, with school performances that were exceptional.Margaret had the respect and support of her parents. This respect enabled her to make clear choices and autonomous decisions relevant to her ambition to become a doctor.

Chapter 7

A Comparative Analysis of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence: Three High Achievers

This chapter attempts to make sense of the growing up experiences of Clifton L. Taulbert (Taulbert), Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Gates), and Margaret Morgan Lawrence (Morgan Lawrence or Margaret). These three high-achieving African Americans were well acquainted with the pangs of segregation, ill funded-schools and discriminatory practices which threatened to diminish their chances of school success. The stories of their lives are distinguished and distinctive, providing understanding into the diverse ways in which these three African Americans were able to successfully matriculate through racist, educational institutions, systems and practices designed to disadvantage them. In reflecting on the meaning of their experiences I have attempted to make sense of them by addressing the questions posed in this dissertation:

> How is it that Black Hegemony has enabled so many black children to matriculate through racist educational institutions, systems and practices designed to disadvantage them?
>
> What is it about Black Hegemony that seems to have had the greatest influence on the

academic achievement of contemporary African-American achievers such as Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Clifton Taulbert?

Emphasizing the voice, life stories and experiential knowledge of each of the three biographers assisted me in analyzing dimensions of Black Hegemony as possible influences in the school success of African-American youth. Insufficient attention has been given to achievers like Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence; youth who achieved in spite of a preponderance of legal, structural and social challenges and obstacles that put them at risk for academic failure. This chapter focuses attention on the dimensions of their lives that enabled their academic success.

Writing Styles of Autobiographers and Labov's Evaluation Method

The writing style and interpretive focus of each biographer was quite different, and as a consequence so was the nature and character of data that emerged from this research. Taulbert's writings assume an idyllic quality as he writes in a prose like form tending toward a great deal of generalization which lent itself well to *Abstract*, one of five narative structures that comprise Labov's Evaluation Model. His attention to detail and the specifics of his life wane as he romanticizes the shades and contours of his growing up experiences in Glen Allan. The text from each of his novels were similar in fashion with great attention given to his emotions, feelings, and sentiments about the people who nurtured him through the pangs and hardships of growing up in a segregated southern town. The respect and deference he accords his family and elders is explicit, but not surprising, for respect of elders is a dimension of Black Hegemony, one that symbolizes a child's successful socialization into African-American culture. So it is not surprising that

it is the dominant lens through which Taulbert critiques his life experiences. His writing appears to be more salutory in nature that critical. Consequently, an acceptable form of critique for many in the African-American community. In contrast Gates' candid portrayal of his life is more straightforward and factual. His narrative story is told with much more detail, explanatory vignettes, and even humor allowing the reader to get at the minutiae of his existence. This fuller accounting of his life made easier the application of Labov's Evaluation Model. For example, one is able to identify the areas of complications in Gates' life such as his mother's illness, his inability to connect psychologically with his father during his school and early adolescent years, and his own hospitalization at age twelve (see Chapter 5). These areas are written with a great deal of detail and explicitness lending itself to the discovery of modes of *Complication* and *Resolution*, two additional structural components of Labov's narrative structures. Because of his attention to detail one is able to get at the conflicts in his life as well as the hows and whens of his resolutions. For example, during his adolescence he participated in frequent dialogue and debate with his father on the contemporary issues of the day. These heady-intellectual experiences seemed to bring him in tune with his father, allowing them to dance a similar dance, one different from the activity of sports which seemed to make feel isolated. Most often Gates is explicit in his *External Evaluation* of the people and events that influenced his life. Comparatively, his narrative text is clearer and more detailed than Taulbert's. Lightfoot's writing has a psychoanalytic focus, probing into the recesses of her mother's [Margaret] mind and spirit. This probing uncovers feelings and experiences that reveal the complexities of Margaret's relationship with her mother, and her motivations for

becoming a medical doctor (see Chapter 6) The complexities contained within this autobiographical sketch reveal the complicated intricacies of a life influenced by multiple factors some of which include the influence of an infant brother who died too soon, and a daughter who was psychologically isolated from her mother as a result of her fears of racism in the Deep South. The details which emerge from the psychological probing of her [Lawrence] mother's life lend themselves to full use of Labov's Evaluation Model. It was not difficult to get at the complications of Margaret's life for the story told was reflective and evaluative in nature. Lawrence with her mother's collaborative voice, state unequivocally that the death of her olderinfant brother complicated their lives. The explicit details contained within the psychodrama of her mother's life were not difficult to determine as the author used an external form of evaluation as she described her mother's moods, interjecting her own perspectives within the lines and pages of the story. The writing styles of each biographer were different. Taulbert's was idyllic; Gates was candid and straightforward, and Lawrence's was psychoanalytic. While their writing styles varied, they produced sufficient data for an interpretation and analysis of Black Hegemony as a vehicle for educational attainment.

Background of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence Via Labov's Narrative Structures

Abstract and Orientation

A general summary and analysis of their lives revealed that they each grew up in poor southern towns prior to the 1960s Civil Rights movement. Because most families, black and white, were poor they often lived next door or within close proximity. In spite of this

physical proximity the towns were segregated as a result of Jim Crow Laws that prohibited social integration. Blacks and whites needed no geographic boundaries, for the boundaries that existed were intangible, existing within their hearts and minds. They were determined by race, social class and the social and political influences of that time. Restrictions for African-American children cut across all domains of life (i.e., housing, right to vote, land ownerships, economic livelihood of their parents, general comings and goings) including childhood friendships and educational access and opportunity. Living during this period of American history (i.e., Pre-Civil Rights) it would appear that they and their parents had few reasons to believe that they could achieve the American dream of the good life or achieve some measure of upward mobility. Given the fact that they were "colored", and given the fact they were living in an era where they were second class citizens, devoid of civil and social rights, it was difficult to imagine that either Clifton, Henry or Margaret would achieve any measure of success. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 had not been passed. So colored children of the South, North, East or West had no rights that whites had to respect. Blacks were disenfranchised. However, as the stories of their lives unfold, we discover that each grew up in families that adopted a philosophy that significantly influenced their parenting styles and behaviors, and ultimately the educational achievement of their children. Each family placed a high value on education, and consistently articulated it to their respective children and the network of nuclear and extended family members that they came in contact with throughout their growing up years. It was also articulated throughout the community associations and school environments in which they lived and participated.

This philosophy framed the watchful gaze of key family members who, early on, assumed conscious responsibility for creating an atmosphere conducive for learning, school readiness and eventual school success.

Complication

The vignettes and tales told by Gates and Morgan Lawrence reflect clear examples of crisis in their lives. Perhaps this is due to their more explicit and detailed writing styles. Gates, for example writes about several crisis and turning points (see Chapter 5). Early on he describes the loving relationship he had with his mother; they spent time together daily, engaged in assorted activities usually related to educational preparation. He sketches an image of a close and loving relationship that had a deeply rooted psychological bond. However, this relationship was threatened when his mother began experiencing the change of life, and was hospitalized for its treatment. According to his story, life was quite different after her hospitalization resulting in a psychological distancing that he seemed never to quite overcome. Another crisis included the sense of psychological isolation he felt from his father and brother during his school and early adolescent years. He recounts struggling with various approaches to help him overcome this sense of isolation. For example, he tried sports, writing about sports, admiring his father and brother's enthusiasm for sports from a distance. None of which helped.Gates is clear, explicit and detailed in his writings, providing for the reader his take or perspective on those events and people that influenced his life. It is important to note, however, that he does not attribute racism as a major hurdle, or school experiences and events that threatened to deny his ambitions as major hurdles or forms of personal crisis. These were handled by

the interventionist approach of his parents, and the advocacy and emissary roles they played in his life. His parents to whom he was psychologically bound, represented the crisis in his life. Not racism, not the disadvantages of living in a prescribed world. He felt nurtured in the protective embraceof their love. Consequently, the crisis that occured within his life were within the family unit. The poignant writing of Morgan Lawrence and Sara Lawrence Lightfoot was equally revealing. The psychoanalytic frame through which they wrote was quite forthcoming. Early on the crises were revealed: the death of an infant brother, and the family's move to the Deep South separating Mary [Margaret's mother] from her mother, sisters, and the bourgeois life-style to which she had become accustomed. Lawrence and Lightfoot weave the story of Margaret's life around these two crisis, making frequent reference to them throughout the text of the autobiography (see Chapter 6). In contrast, Taulbert's romanticized version of his school years only hints at a crisis in the final pages of his life story (see Chapter 4). He only speaks briefly of the challenges he faces as he graduates from high school with fields of dreams to be somebody, but no financial means to support them. Then, quite suddenly, the first book (When We Were Colored) ends and one is led to the next book (Watching Our Crops Come In), which represents another period of his life beyond the scope of this study, and which reveals little more. However, there was sufficient data contained within each of the autobiographies to analyze and critique concerning their perspectives and voice on those factors that influenced their growing up lives.

Evaluation and Result

Each of the autobiographers resolves their stated conflicts in very different ways. For

example, Taulbert mentions that his biological father, whom he had never met, provided an unexpected resolve to his dilemma by providing lodging, and the possibility of going to college up North outside the wails of Glen Allan. What we learn through reading his two novels is that he lived with cousins on his father's side, worked during the day and attended school in the evenings. It took a total of eight years to complete his dreams, but he was able to do so in spite of the interruption of work and military service during the Vietnam War. Resolution to Gates' crisis occurred with his mother's return home from her hospital stay and long-term medication for the treatment of her condition. Though he felt she was never quite the same, her physical return brought great comfort to him, and put him at psychological ease. As Gates grew and matured he was able to relate to his father in extraordinary ways. They became verbal warriors that engaged in a level of intellectual debate and stimulation that grew a strong bond and sense of attachment between father and son. Gates attributes these regular and fearsome debates to the resolution of his conflict with his father. Also, Gates joining his father's religious denomination and name change helped to endear their relationship. These were the reported events that brought resolution to Gates' struggles. And finally, Morgan Lawrence's ambition to become a doctor was one of the ways she determined to win her parents' love and affection. According to Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, Margaret's drive to win their affections by finding a way to "save babies" was her means of bringing resolution to this dilemma. Margaret determined early on that she was in competition with a dead brother for her parents affections. It was this determination that drove her ambitions to become a doctor. It was this determination that influenced her decisions to complete high

school up North, and to marry and live separate from her husband while completing college. It was a long, life-time journey to resolution, hard fought, hard won, but accomplished. As Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence evaluate their lives they use the device of external evaluation to inform readers about their perspective and points of view are. Their points of view are embedded in the numerous quotes contained within Chapters four, five and six, and highlights which follow.

Taulbert

Taulbert was raised by his great grand parents, Poppa, Ma Pearl, and great-aunt, Ma Ponk. Each one played a key role in his school successes and moral development. His assessment of his growing up experiences are contained in the following quote: "a treasure more valuable and enduring than land ownership. It is the treasure that stood out in my colored childhood when there was so little else, and it has been a source of strength to me in all the years since then."(pp. 6-7) And in an equally revealing quote he reflects on the full impact of Poppa on his life. "I built my world around Poppa and he protected me from the harsher realities of our complex social environment." (p. 11) Taulbert also attributes his school success to the efforts of Poppa and Ma Pearl. "We lived in town, which gave me full opportunity to go to school. Getting an education was a priority in our house" (p. 28), and a charge that was given repeatedly in many settings. Taulbert remembers his Poppa's words to his eighth-grade graduation class, " he charged us not to cause trouble, to be diligent in our work and to go as far as we could." (p. 36) Early on Poppa established high expectations for school success, and continued to convey its importance throughout his growing up years. Ma Ponk was an important figure in

Taulbert's background. Taulbert's reflections of her provide a window into the nature and scope of their relationship. "Ma Ponk and I had been a team for most of my life. She had taught me how to work and how to survive in our colored environment. But she had also shown me the value of an education." (p. 143) And finally, Mama Mary's continuous contact and involvements with her son represents a significant influence during young Taulbert's youth. As an unmarried teen mom she gave birth to her son right out of high school, because she was so very young and inexperienced she solicited the support of family members who would ably assist her in raising her son. She didn't however, abandon him; she remained active in his life. Taulbert recalls, "She lived within walking distance of Poppa's house. I spent a great deal of time with her as well as with my other aunts and uncles, enjoying the benefits of an extended family." (pp. 10-11) His analysis gives credit to family as"the" primary force and influence in his educational life.

Gates

Mother Pauline and Father Henry figured prominently in Gates' life. They developed a world-view or personal philosophy of education which guided their interactions with young Gates. Having made the decision to provide the best "so that no white person could put us down or keep us out for reasons of appearance, color aside" (p. 35), Pauline was prepared to intervene on her son's behalf whenever necessary. Gates remembers, "When I started at the white school in '56, everybody I knew was excited about integration, and everybody was scared. Mama would grill us every day about who said what and *how*. Mama did not play when it came to her boys, and she wasn't going to let any white woman or man step on her babies' dreams." (p. 92) Pauline and Henry

intervened in the lives of their children early on, in preventive ways. Pauline taught young Gates to read and write before entering school, talked with him daily, and interceded on his behalf with doctors, teachers and family. Henry spent quality time with both his sons. Engaged in sports, family outings, literate behaviors (reading, completing crossword puzzles, citing puns), and continual debates that enabled him to develop higher-level thinking skills such as deductive and inductive reasoning, reflection and analysis. These skills would prove helpful to him as he entered the arena of collegiate studies and academic thought. Gates' analysis leads one to believe that he attributes much of his academic success to the watchful and interventionist gaze of his parents.

Morgan Lawrence (Margaret)

Candy Man, Margaret's deceased brother, greatly influenced her personal goals and life ambitions. His early death, brought a measure of sadness to her household and youth. The sadness created in her the desire to "save babies" in a vein attempt to make her parents happy. This silent competition served as the catalyst that fueled Margaret's ambition to become a physician. Margaret's parents gave their daughter a great deal of autonomy so much so that Margaret often felt like a third adult in the house. This climate of permissiveness made it easy for her to announce her personal decision, at age fourteen, to move North to complete high school so that she would be better positioned for acceptance into medical school. Margaret reflects, "she had decided to become a doctor, so she needed a good sound education. She had to go North to get it. This was not coming from my parents, but it was coming from *me* . . . I wanted to go to New York because I wanted to go to a better school . . . so I could be a doctor . . . so I would be

able to save babies." (pp. 72-73) Though she was allowed a great deal of independence, freedom and autonomy for most girls, she was quite observant of her parents and identified with them to a large measure. For example, she was quiet, focused and shy like her mother, and developed a great capacity for single-minded concentration from watching her mother teach. She credits her mother with giving her a "solid and sure foundation" for learning. "Even as she yearned for signs of love from Mary and felt her mother's passionate bond to 'the Smithies [Mary's family].' Margaret was always secure in her mother's glowing respect." (p. 237) Margaret also identified with her father, "I loved my father to distraction; I very much identified with him. Everyone told me I looked like him." (pp. 43-44) From her father she learned how to negotiate relationships with whites, and how to effectively propose and obtain needed resources. These skills would eventually result in the receipt of scholarships and awards that would provide financial support for her academic pursuits.

Analysis of Background Characteristics

Each of the biographers, Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence lived in the segregated communities of the South, during times in which African-Americans were disenfranchised. The right to vote, attend schools of choice, interact with friends of choice, live in communities of choice, eat and drink in places of choice were all denied. From a historical, legal, social and political perspective they had little hope of upward mobility. Neither could they nor their families expect equity or fair play in matters of education and schooling. In spite of these harsh realities, their families' visions of upward mobility, and educational attainment prevailed. The dreams and vision for a better life were so strong

and pervasive in the lives of the families that nurtured Taulbert, Gates and Margaret that they appeared to mitigate the "painful realities" of their backgrounds. The racist laws that existed during the Jim Crow/ Pre-Civil Rights era of their lives limited and restricted their movements, play relationships, and resources for achievement. However, it did not limit or restrict their ambitions as it did *not* for generations of African Americans. Billingsley (1992) says that "among all the sources of survival, achievement, and viability of African-American families, education has played a preeminent role. The thirst for learning, like the thirst for family life, crossed the Atlantic with the African captives." (p. 174) Sara Lawrence Lightfoot and John Hope Franklin, noted educators, affirm Billingsley's conclusion: "The desire to learn to read and to write was keen in the black communities of the antebellum America. . . . Even in the dilapidated log cabins of the slave quarters the desire for education was nurtured and strengthened as an integral part of the socialization patterns and kinship networks of black men and women held in bondage." (Billingsley, 1992, p. 174) The background and socialization experiences of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence were no different. Their parents and extended family members dreamed the same dreams, raising them up in environments that gave birth to and nurtured their dreams for a better life, education and schoolsuccess. The world-views and philosophical perspectives on the importance of education adopted by their families (Taulbert's extended family, Gates' nuclear family and embedded in the respect Margaret's parents held for her ambitions) served as a form of "effort optimism" in spite of the limitations white society would place on them. This "effort optimism" was part of the seamless continuum of messages conveyed by family and community members.

Taulbert's words iterate this point. "Miss Ross, Miss Maxey, and the other colored teachers had convinced us that no obstacle should stand in the way of our goals. Remember the lives of Carver, Bethune, Anderson and Robinson!" (p. 37) The research findings on the transmission of cultural values by Janice Hale (1991) reveal the important role stories of heroes, struggle and triumph played in the achievement process. "These stories transmit the messages to African-American children that quicksand and land mines line the pathway to becoming an academic achiever in America; however, they also transmit the message that it is possible to overcome these obstacles. These stories help African-American children depersonalize oppression when they encounter it and enable them to place their personal difficulties into the context of the overall African American liberation struggle." (pp. 12-13) The philosophical perspectives of their families and communities on the human agency and self-efficacy of their children differed significantly from that of white society. They believed in their children, in their capacities and abilities to learn. The notion that their children could be intellectual misfits, and mentally or intellectually inferior was not entertained. While whites busied themselves establishing structural and legal avenues to circumvent the educational attainment of black children, their parents were busy indoctrinating them with their world-view: education is the way-to-make-it, a view that had historical precedence, and one that was dominant in their lives.

It appears that the messages communicated to Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence by their families such as " get ahead . . . make something of yourself . . . be a doctor" superseded the restrictive opportunities available to Blacks during this Pre-Civil Rights era. The messages that communicated dreams and ambitions created an invisible force

that enabled Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence to prevail over what appeared to be insurmountable Jim Crow laws that would deny them access to the hopes and dreams of their ambitions. In fact Margaret reports that "the southern psyche had so fully incorporated the caste system between the races that there was no need for geographic boundaries. The map of segregation resided in the minds of blacks and whites, and there was no need to draw it on the land." (p. 48) However, in Margaret's own words which appear representative of Gates' and Taulbert's experiences as well, "I was in no way destroyed by racial separation." (p. 167) Another example of Margaret's positive sense of self can be seen in the following reflection: "Despite the prejudice in this 'benighted place, [Vicksburg]' she was made to feel strong and confident . To be able to say over the telephone as a child, when someone called and asked 'Is Morgan there?' to say 'you mean my father, the Reverend Mr. Morgan showed ten-year-old Margaret's ability not to let the white world undermine her sense of self-worth." (pp. 201 -202) Her parents and the families of Gates and Taulbert had helped them to "depersonalize oppression" and "place their personal difficulties into the context of the overall African American liberation struggle." (Hale, p. 13) The retrospective analysis embedded in the accounts of their storied lives lead me to conclude that their families created a familial climate that served as the primary determinant of their educational success. While their families were mindful of the oppressive laws and systems that threatened their children's chances for school success, they did not allow their knowledge of it to oppress their children's hopes and ambitions. Ogbu's (1986) research findings on achievement failures in black youth suggest a different response. He argues that the "collective history of subordination and

exploitation are sufficiently pervasive that it discourages blacks from "identifying hard work, individual effort and education as the primary determinants" of school success. While this might have well-been true and an operative element in the lives of children participating his research, it most certainly was not the case in the lives of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence. The families of Taulbert, Gates and Lawrence encouraged hard work, individual effort and education as key, primary determinants in their quest for achievement. As the individual case histories detailed in Chapters Four, Five, and Six point out "education as the way-to-make-it," a black-hegemonic trait, was a primary feature of their belief system. It is this belief that spurred the adaptive behaviors that resulted in high levels of academic achievement. Obgu, in this same 1986 work, posits that a family's knowledge of institutional oppression and exploitation, when communicated to children can produce "maladaptive educational consequences." His research produced such findings. However, they are not generalizable to all populations of African Americans, and appear to find no applicability in the lives of these three high-achievers. In contrast, the adaptive behaviors of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence appear to be more consistent with the research findings of O'Connor (1997). The ambitions and academic motivations of African-American students, she posits, are not curtailed or constrained by their knowledge of and experience with life's challenges and struggles. Instead, their awareness and knowledge of struggle may have contributed to their adaptive behaviors or sense of "self agency". The growing up experiences of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence are more consistent with the findings of O'Connor.

The events and background experiences of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence as

presented by the Narrative Structures of Labov's Evaluation Model provide a sound basis for analyzing the complex forces that influenced their youth. Dimensions of Black Hegemony also emerge from the events revealed in the Narrative Structures of Labov's Evaluation Model providing an heuristic frame for their examination.

Black-Hegemonic Traits Influencing School Success and Academic Achievement

Black Hegemony was a dominant influence in the lives of Taulbert, Gates, and Morgan Lawrence. It was an integral part of the philosophical framework of their families, providing a rich and varied array of support and orientations that produced adaptive behaviors and high educational outcomes for their children. The dimensions of Black Hegemony and the dynamic interplay between them differed for each biographer; they were clearly present directing, shaping and affecting the educational outcomes of their school experiences. Narrative details of each are contained within Chapters four, five and six. What follows is a comparative analysis of how Black Hegemony impacted the lives of these three high achievers.

Education as the way-to-make-it

"Education as the way-to-make-it" is a dominant theme and philosophical construct throughout the pages of each of the participant's storied lives. It was communicated by their families as "the ticket to freedom" for Taulbert, modeled as a "legacy of achievement" within the Gates' extended family network, and as a "personal ambition" which was respected and "never questioned" by the parents of Margaret Morgan Lawrence. Each family had so forcefully communicated this educational theme that early on each biographer expressed dreams of "being doctors," or "somebody".

Spirituality, and a belief in God

Their dreams of medical careers or to "be somebody" were buoyed by a sense of "Spirituality and a Belief in God," a second black-hegemonic trait. This appears to me to be especially significant as each met with obstacles that had real potential to squelch their hopes and dreams. Hill (1971) writes: "Blacks have been adept at using religion as a mechanism for survival and advancement throughout their history in America. During slavery, religion served as a stimulant for hundreds of rebellion that took place. It was also a major source of strength during the Civil Rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's. . . . But it was through the Negro church, one of the most independent institutions in the black community that blacks learned to use religion as a survival mechanism." (p. 33) This same theme runs through the lives of Taulbert, Gates and Lawrence. Taulbert's narrative isn't quite as specific and detailed as the others on challenges that threatened to stifle his dreams. The pages of his story reveal a number of factors: the "painful realities of segregation"; attending "plantation schools"; and "traveling over one hundred miles by bus, round trip, each day to the colored high school in Greenville." (p. 146) "Our church was all our own, beyond the influence of whites, with its own societal structure." (p. 91) Though Taulbert, himself attended church all day Sunday, every week throughout his youth, he "didn't confess religion" (p. 103). However, Ma Ponk with whom he lived for most of his life, believed in the valued of an education as taught by her church. And Mother Luella Byrd, church matriarch and leader, taught and inspired him as she inspired her pupils' "unorganized minds . . . encouraged them to work hard and get an education" (p. 95). "Yes, the colored church became the sanctuary for our dreams . . . and what we

hoped to become." (p. 106) The church's members and leaders supported his families' philosophical frame, education as the way-to-make-it. On the other hand, the experiences of Gates and Morgan Lawrence were quite different. Both professed a spiritual faith that appeared a seamless part of their lives. Gates reports that " What the church did provide was a sense of community, moments of intimacy, of belonging to a culture" (p. 116), "attending church every Sunday . . . I didn't come to like it until ten or eleven." (p. 115) His memories indicate that prayer and a religious faith permeated all aspects of his life. For example, he remembers praying for "good grades . . a fishing pole . . and for his mother's life" during her hospitalization for depression and the "change of life." At one point in his preadolescence he had expressed a strong desire to pursue the ministry. And finally, his biography documents his continued involvement in religion as he joined the Episcopalian church during his early adulthood (collegiate years), worshiping with his parents at his father's church. A religious faith is reported as a powerful and sustaining force during his youth, one that would help to sustain him as he met the challenges of school, career decisions, his mother's sickness and his own lengthy convalescence while recovering from leg and hip surgery during his early adolescence. His religious faith helped him to answer some of the intellectual curiosities he had about life, to pursue medicine, a career different from his brief desire to be a minister. Gates appears to have been more directly influenced by a spiritual faith than did Taulbert. Hedetails its affects with greater depth and clarity than does Taulbert, leading one to conclude that it had greater effect in his life than it did in Taulbert's. The combination of a potent personal faith that appeared to enable him, coupled with his parents' philosophical

position on education as the way-to-make-it, made Gates a strong candidate for school success.

Margaret's experiences with spirituality were more similar to those of Gates' than Taulbert's. She also reports on religious instruction in her life. Her biography provides a poignant example, and speaks for itself: "Margaret learned to feel this Spirit as a strong presence in her life. She prayed regularly and sought comfort and strength from this source. 'My father taught me to read Psalm 27 . . . The Lord is my light and salvation' . . . 'be of good courage' is the way it ends. He taught me to read this Psalm just before my examinations. You had to study for exams, but you also read that Psalm. I had a sense of being in touch with the Spirit, Lord Jesus God . . . and I expected a response . . . I think once I had done well I felt it was mine! I had done my part. I had invoked help." (p. 61) Margaret's faith offered support when she faced tough challenges in Vicksburg. And, it provided support while completing high school up North thousands of miles away from her parents. She found that Rev. Johnson's Episcopal church located in Harlem served as "a haven" for her during her stay away from home. The spiritual faith that had become internal to Margaret ensured movement toward reaching her self-initiated goal of becoming a doctor to "save babies." During their youth each one seemed to have a religious faith that helped them to overcome challenges. While the degree to which they internalized their religious faith varied, without question it appears to have supported the philosophical construct of their families (i.e., education as the way-to-make-it), shoring up the possibilities of their eventual school success. Billingsley (1992) provides summative commentary that captures the essence of the Church and spirituality in the lives of these

three individuals and in the lives of most African-Americans: "Indeed no successful movement for improving the conditions of life for the African-American people has been mounted without the support of the church." (p. 350)

Community

A strong sense of community and respect for its influence in their lives, is yet another black-hegemonic trait that gave advantage to their lives. Some common threads that run through each of their lives appears to be the socialization processes that provided a "collective extended self-identity". . . . Semaj (in Hale, p. 7) points out that a key to helping African-American children construct and maintain a positive ethnic self-identity is for primary socializing agents (e.g., parents, relatives, teachers) to present evidence to the child confirming the worth of African American culture and people". Evidences of this socialization process are contained within the stories of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence. While there is this common strand, there is also variation between the expressions of community. Taulbert's community was composed of his extended family, church members and black teachers. In his own words Taulbert speaks of a collective consciousness that created a cultural surround, imbibing him with the sense that they were a "treasure more valuable and enduring than land ownership" (p. 6), and that "they showed themselves to be a great people." (p. 7) He reports that they were "a source of strength to me" (p. 7), as "I clung to the promises . . . heard all my life from those who nurtured me in Glen Allan." (p. 153) The black community, not the white community, but the black community believed in him, in his abilities, and envisioned a future of possibilities for him when the racist, social and historical inequities of the segregated

South would not. They socialized into him a positive sense of self. Black teachers played a pivotal role in the composition of Taulbert's community. They taught him about the 'big four', who had achieved in spite of the historical societal obstacles facing African Americans. It was his knowledge of their accomplishments, his acquaintance with their mastery, and the images of how they overcame that stuck in his mind, creating the knowledge in him that academic success was not the exclusive domain of whites. But, that academic success was a part of his colored reality, a promise for those who kept their eyes on the prize. The composition of Gates' community varied considerably from that of Taulbert's but was of no less importance. Select extended family members, the Gates rather than the Colemans, were people he could relate to. They appeared to provide a psychological community that was consistent with his personal ambitions. ". . . They read detective novels and traded them with each other, did crossword puzzles, and loved puns." (p. 67) Their daily behaviors were more consistent with the intellectual interests of young Gates than were the Colemans' (his mother's brothers), who taught him to swim, fish, hunt, and the life-saving skills of scouting. His peers, the Fearsome Foursome-a black consciousness club, were an equally important element in the community of people that nurtured his success. They met together, engaging in "identity-affirming behaviors" like regularly reading books, and participating in debates focused on current issues related to race. This community, suggest Tatum (1997), provided the type of psychological support needed for black youth attending integrated schools. The discussions they engaged in and among themselves and with his father enabled him to wrestle with the tasks of discovering who he was as an adolescent, and a black adolescent in particular.

During the period of his youth positive messages concerning his identity as a capable youth who could easily achieve the American dream of success were not forth coming from the newly integrated schools of Piedmont, West Virginia. Especially, since his older brother Rocky missed out on a number of opportunities to excel at the local and state level simply because he was black. The decided advantage of having a peer-support group to ruminate with, gain perspective, and develop coping strategies worked in his favor. He was able to develop meaningful responses to segregated living within the intimacy of a group of peers that he liked and respected. Morgan Lawrence's community was quite similar to that of Taulbert and Gates. It was similar to Taulbert's in that she was inspired by a community of adults who were also accomplished professionals. Her father initiated a community of support by asking his good friend, Rev. Johnson of Harlem, to connect her with a community of people who could sustain the academic achievements and school success that she had experienced in the South. Differences in community arise, however, around the aspect of community service. There is a great deal more evidence of community service in the storied life of Margaret, than in the lives of Taulbert and Gates. "From the beginning, community service has been an element of black religious expression," notes Billingsley (1992, p. 352). "The wide array of social-service activities on the part of black churches has recently come to the attention of the concerned national public. . . . Their efforts range from complex, foundation-financed child development programs to simple but sensible adopt-a-family projects." (Ibid., 1992, p. 357) This type of community service is evident in the relationship created by Rev. Johnson, a Harlem minister, as he responded to the request of Margaret's father to

connect his daughter with some persons whowould support her schooling. The result was the creation of a mentor group of professional black women - the Negro Ladies of Harlem who supported Margaret's personal goals and drive for academic excellence. Margaret's assessment of them follows: "she felt chosen, and challenged by these impressive women. . . 'These Negro ladies had a tremendous effect on me. . . . They were learned, with a concern for you as a person . . All these women conveyed their expectations through praise and admonition, but mostly through examples, by the way they conducted themselves, communicated their thoughts, and pursued their goals; by their striking combination of personal ambition and community responsibility." (pp. 88-89) They socialized her into acommunity of black professional women whose positive sense of self inspired Margaret's ambitions, and supported her continued strides toward academic excellence. Her community was similar to Gates in that she had a group of "black female peers" with whom she could ruminate, explore issues of color, adolescence and scholarship. Chapter six of this dissertation records the details of their relationship and its influence on her school success However, one additional perspective of Margaret's is important to note here. "One of Margaret's worlds-the black community- - felt abundant and rewarding. The other - - the white world - - was recognized as dehumanizing but experienced as largely irrelevant." (p. 105) Scholar Murray-Nettles (1991) says, "mentoring and advocacy are widely viewed as promising forms of support that can be provided through formal interventions for students who already show evidence of adverse school outcomes." (p. 139) This description of the benefits of mentoring and advocacy describe well the experiences of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence. While

Lawrence's experiences are described in the paragraph above. Taulbert's and Gates' deserve further comment. In the case of Taulbert, Mr. Fields (see Chapter four, this dissertation) served as an advocate, always checking up on and after his school work. Semaj (Hale, 1991) would interpret this activity as part of Taulbert's socialization experience, one that helped to foster and maintain a sense of self-agency and ethnic self-identity. This socialization experience was remembered by Taulbert, and as such served to facilitate and support his educational success. Similar comment can be made about the activity of Gates' mother. She worked hard in her role as chief advocate and spokesperson for her boys. And in doing so she increased their chances for high academic performance and achievement of their goals. Though McAdoo (in Murray-Nettles, 1991) suggests that African-American students often have limited access to resourceful adult helpers or rely heavily on peers, this did not appear to be the case with the three young achievers that are the focus of this study. Conversely, they appeared to have both formal and informal advocates and mentors whose active engagement and socialization efforts influenced the growth of "positive ethnic self-identity" thereby, significantly increasing their chances for fulfilling their goals and ambitions. Taulbert, Gates, and Morgan Lawrence benefitted, enormously, from the communities that seemed to support and advance their's and their families' ambitions. For the most part, the communities described in each of these biographies appear most prominently during their adolescent lives, a crucial period for identity formation (e.g., gender and ethnicity), and career development. It is striking that each of the biographers chose to incorporate the mention of these entities at this significant period of their lives. It's possible that their timeliness

played a critical role in the positive identity formation that is so necessary for school success. Though the community compositions were different; they had the cumulative effect of facilitating the goals established early in their childhoods: the goal of "becoming somebody," and becoming medical doctors. While community seems to be a secondary aspect of Black Hegemony as compared to education as the way-to-make-it, and spirituality and a belief in God (at least in the lives of these three youth), it is of no less importance. It appears to serve as a complimentary force to the processes (e.g., philosophical construct for achievement, spiritual grounding) already set in motion by their families. Billingsley (1992) argues that a sense of community among African Americans exist as a result of a "shared set of values," the primacy of family, the importance of education, and the necessity for individual enterprise and hard work. We see these same shared values laced throughout the experiential tales of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence.

Political and Social Activism

Political and social activism on the part of African Americans has contributed to the civil, political and economic gains made during their over four hundred year tenure in this country. It is one of the hallmarks of Black Hegemony, and like the other dimensions have contributed to the school achievement of Taulbert, Gates, and Morgan Lawrence. However, it had varying degrees of prominence during their growing up years. Taulbert's story records no obvious or implied evidences of political and social activism in his home, church or school communities. A telephone interview with him revealed a similar conclusion. As he responded to my question about the political activities of the

people of Glen Allan, he provides the following response. Glen Allan was not a large town with stores, restaurants and services. There was little to politic for, a small library and a small restaurant. "It was too small to get up any steam to protest." On the other hand, Gates' story records many instances. His parents started out with a philosophical construct that drove every aspect of young Gates' life. They were a proactive couple who believed in early intervention and prevention as a political posture, one that favored Gates and gave him the kind of edge that would allow him to excel. For example, his mother taught him to read and write before he went to school. She served on the PTA and assumed an active role as Secretary, a policy and decision making role. She served as an advocate for her children, as she intervened on their behalf at the school, with their teachers, doctors, and anyone else whose practices and policies threatened to diminish her children's chances for school success. She meant for them to be doctors, and for nothing to stand in their way. Gates remembers her as the one who taught them "how to fight." Before he was born, she had participated in a protest demonstration for greater educational opportunities for black children, and she supported young Gates' efforts as he became more politically involved during the 1960's. Gates' interpretive reflections help us to understand his point of view. "I was secure in her knowledge of things, how to do things and function in the world, of how to be in the world and command respect. In her courage I was safe. . . But most important of all, for Piedmont and for me, she did not seem to fear white people . . . Her attitude was that she and Daddy would provide the best for us, so that no white person could put us down or keep us out for reasons of appearance, color aside." (pp. 34-35) Political and social activism on behalf of her family

was a means to an end - - her children realizing their dreams. Margaret's father's behavior was political in nature, "he was aggressive but he passed himself off as being humble." (p. 46) He had other qualities that made him fearless like a politician. "He did not expect to be rebuffed or rejected. He assumed that people would be drawn to him; and within reason, he assumed that the white folks he reached out to would do him no harm. . . I never thought of him as afraid of white people." Margaret was observant of her father and learned effective strategies for getting what she wanted. "As Margaret watched her father . . . she learned important lessons about the art of asking and receiving. She learned that one could approach a rich patron without diminishing oneself. . . I began to have an image of a white person who is respectful of my father." (p. 51) Finally, she experienced her father making connections on her behalf with Rev. Johnson of Harlem, so that she would have the necessary supports to facilitate her continued academic success. The cumulative effect of these experiences and images was that Margaret was now partially socialized into the world of mainstream white America; she knew something about the politics of working with whites, how to engage their interest and to secure the financial resources necessary to help her fulfill her ambitions. Political and social activity was much more evident in the lives of Gates and Lawrence than Taulbert. They gained insight and skills from witnessing their parents' political manueverings in their work on their behalf.

Creativity: Making a way-out-of-no-way

Black families have always demonstrated "the ability for self-help and the ability to accept help when appropriate. This strength is characteristic of most black families, for

contrary to popular conception, black families place a strong emphasis on work and ambition." (Hill, 1971, p. 9) It is this characteristic that we see in each of the life stories profiled in this dissertation. Taulbert reports, "there was a strong work ethic when I was growing up in the South. Every colored person worked from the time he was old enough to drag a sack through the cotton fields. . . . Everybody worked, because in spite of everything most of the older people still clung fast to the belief that if you worked hard, you would get a slice of the American dream." (pp.39-40) It was through hard work that Taulbert finally made his way through college. His extended family could not afford to send him to college after his celebrated high school graduation as class Valedictorian. But they did connect him up with his biological father who welcomed him to St. Louis and the home of friends with whom he could live while working and placing himself through college over the next eight years. Taulbert had worked at many jobs during his youth as cotton picker, leaf raker, assistant to the ice man, store clerk, and finally as dishwasher to pay his way through college. He was no stranger to work. While there are no reported instances of Gates working during his growing up years creativity and hard work were represented most clearly through his mother's undaunting determination to have her sons become doctors. She had previously quit school after junior high to help her four brothers through college. It was this same determination that allowed her to make whatever were the requisite sacrifices to support her sons' ambitions. When her sons were threatened with the possibility of losing academic awards (Rocky the Horseshoe award) or presenting a speech, she would be there, coaching them as they learned their parts to perfection. If the teachers refused or appeared to be shying away from doing their part; she would step

in and guide the study behaviors of her sons so that they could receive the awards and recognition she knew they so richly deserved. And they did. They won local debates, and history and writing competitions with the able assistance of their mother who was their chief advocate and emissary. Morgan Lawrence was creative in her own right. She was a free thinker, imaginative and especially aggressive when it came to matters of schooling. She set the course and direction for her ambitions, and her family who respected her simply complied. Margaret could have completed high school in Vicksburg, but conceived of an alternative plan that required the creative resources of family. She would stay with her aunts and grandmother Mary in Harlem in order to attend a northern school that she assumed would make her more competitive and attractive for medical school admission. Her extended family made room in their small Harlem apartment for their niece Margaret. Though this, placed a hardship on the family; they made the adjustment, allowing Margaret to displace a family member from living space that had been comfortable for the three that lived there (a grandmother, aunt and uncle). The family made sacrifice. Margaret adjusted and was set on a straight path to educational success. During her collegiate years Margaret was no stranger to hard work. In addition to her scholarships from the National Council of the Episcopal Church and the Regents Scholarship she had from Cornell University, she worked as a maid and a domestic. Margaret reflects on the experiences. For example, she reports on arriving at Cornell "without money, without fanfare" and without a place for a "Negro student to live' (p. 94). However, Margaret's ambitions persevered enabling her to seek room and board in the home of whites [Dillons] where she would act as servant and maid. "The Dillons

seemed to like the fact that I was Negro . . . wore a uniform, waited on tables, and ate separately in the kitchen. Mrs. Dillon was more rigid than her husband. She wanted me in my place." (pp. 95-96) Another example of her work experiences as a domestic worker follows: " . . . the work was demanding and strenuous. We [Sarah and Margaret, Sarah was also a black student at Cornell] did everything; planned meals, cooked, cleaned. We managed the household." (p. 103) Hard work and creativity played an important role in establishing the course toward upward mobility and educational achievement for Taulbert and Morgan Lawrence.

Stick-to-it-ness

Resilience and perseverance are important coping strategies for African-American survival in mainstream society. We see many evidences of it in the portraits of the young lives pictured by Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence. Taulbert provides for me the most striking case of perseverance. He reports riding a schoolbus over 100 miles-round trip daily to a black high school because the white high school, located a few blocks from his home, was segregated and not open to blacks. This is a story of sure bravery and triumph. It is a testimony to the high value blacks placed on education, and a critique of the strong will and commitment of a young boy who wanted to "be somebody." He adopted his families' hopes and dreams, using them to fuel his ambition. Hill (1971) speaks of the strong achievement pressures black youth experience from parents in lower status black families. His research findings indicated that "among lower status students, the proportion reporting that their parents influenced their college attendance was higher among blacks than whites." (p. 31) Perhaps this pressure was operable in Taulbert's life,

serving as a motivating factor for the perseverance and resilience demonstrated in Taulbert's remarkable efforts to finish high school. Examples of resilience and perseverance in Gates' life are best illustrated through the efforts of his mother who worked and sent four brothers through college, sending them money, darning and washing their clothes. And if that wasn't enough, she was prepared to continue the same type of sacrifice for her own sons. She was prepared to make whatever sacrifice for her boys to become doctors. And she did. She persevered as she taught him to read and write, as she intervened on his behalf at school, and as she persevered within the medical community as she sought the right medical treatment for young Gates' leg. Pauline Gates was the epitome of resilience. She was determined that her son would get an education, achieve, and become a doctor. Examples of resilience and perseverance are evident within Margaret's life. She worked many long years to become a medical doctor making many sacrifice such as marrying while in college, and making the sacrifice to live separate from her husband. She persevered through years of study, through discriminatory policies that would deny her admission into Cornell's Medical College, and hospital residencies that would not allow a practicing African American. Margaret's journey toward becoming a physician was a long, hard road, that was won only with the twin companions of resilience and perseverance.

Family

Family members had an influence on the academic achievements of their children. The parents of these three achievers were deliberate and intentional in assisting their children to become upwardly mobile, educated and accomplished. In their deliberations they

managed to develop a number of behaviors that influenced the academic achievements of their children. The parental and familial behaviors of Taulbert's family are more implied than expressed. However, they carried out an important task by readying him for the rigors of school life by setting the stage for formal learning that would take place in the school setting. Taulbert arrived at school with the requisite attitude for learning. Ma Ponk dressed him appropriately and gave him instructions about how to discipline himself and mind the teacher: "Don't sass Miss May Maxey. . . Don't leave the school ground. . . Don't be cutting up at your seat. . . And come straight home after school is out." (p. 30) A mind to work, and a strong sense of school readiness were the gifts his family gave him. Their greatest gift over the years, however, appeared to be motivation. The motivation to "be somebody" to "go as far as you could go," and to seek out other opportunities, "be a builder of buildings, a doctor." Between the continuous urgings and advisement of Uncle Cleve, of Ma Ponk, Mr. Fields, Poppa and his Mother, Taulbert was bound to internalize these values. And so he did. In his own voice, "most of all, the hopes of my mother, the gentle wisdom of Poppa and the strength and determination of Ma Ponk would remain a part of me as I ventured out of the colored world." (p. 152) The behavior of Gates' parents was much more explicit in envisioning and directing his school success. Pauline taught him to "read and write in one day" (p. 29); she purchased magazines ("Jack & Jill" p. 26) to introduce him to the outside world; she embellished his communication skills with language tools such as "puppets and marionette . . . ventriloquist dummy." (p. 31) These and other items enhanced his communicative as well as his cognitive abilities. She was actively involved in the school supporting its programs (PTA), intervening as needed

when her sons' efforts in school appeared to be at risk as a result of some discriminatory policy. She tutored her sons at home when they were part of a local or state competition. She had a definite presence in their lives, squelching, orchestrating and redirecting every aspect that threatened to diminish or take away their dreams. His father Henry was also active in the daily lives of his two sons. He supported their extra-curricular activities such as sports, games at home, and entered into their conversations about world events. The combined efforts of his two parents along with the other elements of Black Hegemony (mentioned earlier) created a powerful learning force that influenced and undergirded his academic achievement. The extended family members of Gates also modeled achievement behaviors. The Coleman brothers were college graduates, so were his aunts and uncles on the Gates' side. Several of his cousins went on to college as did his brother Rocky. There were strong models of achievement within his family structure. Models that demonstrated his family's orientation toward academic achievement, an orientation that was not the exclusive domain of whites. Gates was acquainted with models near and dear to his heart. He and his family did not have to look to whites as a model, they were present and related to him, in living color. Margaret's parents were also deliberate about her education. Her mother taught her to read at age three. As she watched her mother instruct other children, she absorbed her mother's ability to focus and concentrate while reading and studying. Lawrence-Lightfoot's evaluation of her mother's [Margaret] relationship with her mother supports this conclusion. "As the daughter of a "fierce" and determined teacher, she learned the student role early: the discipline and skills required to accomplish a task, and the social interactions that sustain good student-teacher

relationships." (p. 83) These factors figured heavily in preparing her for school success. Her father was no less involved in behaviors that influenced her school success. "Margaret spent a lot of time in the church. As her father's daughter, she was expected to be present at all of the services; special occasions such as baptisms, marriages, and funerals, as well as the regular Sunday services . . . . Margaret not only felt a responsibility to be vigilant and sensitive to her father's needs. She had special antennae to pick up her father's every move and motive." (p. 56) In Margaret's own words, "I was very much aware of my father all the time." (p. 56) "I think I had a difficult time being in the position as my father's daughter and seeing my father minister to people. He would be administering and responding in a *feeling sense* to people who were grieving . . . . I now recognize that this is part of my interest in catharsis, my interest in how you help people with their feelings." (p. 57) Margaret attritubes her interest in and success as a child psychiatrist to these growing-up experiences. Margaret also accompanied her father on his ministerial outings and took special note of how he worked with whites. For example, Margaret reflects on the following experience: "As Margaret watched her father and Mrs. Johnson, she learned important lessons about the art of asking and receiving. She learned that one cold approach a rich patron without diminishing oneself." (p. 51) Observant Margaret picked up his skills and was able to apply them later in school settings far from home. She experienced the longhand of her father as he provided support for her studies and success away from home, making the necessary Harlem connections so that she could continue her academic studies in an environment of warmth and support. And her connection with Miss Ramee. "It was a connection that had special meaning because

it had been initiated by Margaret's father. 'My father had put me in touch with them, and they very proudly took me on and gave me money' " (p. 176) Her parents were deliberate and intentional in their support of her education. But most importantly, they were especially supportive of Margaret as she demonstrated an interest in and determination to become a doctor. They respected her and responded to each request she made, for "they always did what I wanted if they could." (p. 237) In the Background section of this chapter we established the strong presence and influences of key family members in the lives of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence. The family and kinship bonds of each of these individuals was strong and solid. It is one of the strengths of Black families identified by Hill (1971) in his infamous study and evidenced in the experiential stories of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence. Dunst and Deal's (1988) findings on *Qualities of Strong Families suggest* a combination of qualities that define strong families. They provide a list of 12 qualities, any combinations of which characterize strong families. Strands of the following five qualities characterize the Taulbert, Gates and Morgan families. Each family previously profiled have different constellations of the qualities highlighted below:

- A belief and sense of commitment toward promoting the well-being and growth of individual family members as well as that of the family unit. *Taulbert and Gates*
- Concentrated effort to spend time and do things together, no matter how formal or informal the activity or event. *Taulbert, Gates, Morgan*
- A clear set of family rules, values, and beliefs that establishes expectations about acceptable and desired behavior. *Taulbert, Gates, Morgan*

- The ability to engage in problem-solving activities designed to evaluate options for meeting needs and procuring resources. *Taulbert, Gates, Morgan*
- The ability to be positive and see the positive in almost all aspects of their lives, including the ability to see crisis and problems as an opportunity to learn and grow. *Taulbert and Gates.*

The Taulbert, Gates and Morgan families as described in their respective biographies were strong families with different constellations that contributed to the academic successes of CliftonL. Taulbert, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Margaret Morgan Lawrence.

The multifaceted dimensions of Black Hegemony were present and operable in their growing up lives. They had great impact, undergirding and influencing their educational experiences and outcomes. The Narrative Structures of Labov's Evaluation Model (LEM) and the Dimensions of Black Hegemony (BH) provided dual approaches to analyzing the colorful data that spews forth from the pages of Taulbert's, Gates' and Morgan Lawrences' life. The dual approaches provide, for this researcher, provocative insight into the complex dimensions of their lives and the times, events, and people who influenced their academic and school successes. A great deal has been discerned about school achievement and the people and processes that influenced it in the life and times of these three individuals. My initial queries have been answered. I now understand how Black Hegemony influenced the academic lives of these three individuals, and I have increased understanding as to how its dimensions work in tandem with each other. However, what remains a query is the following question: How and in what ways can Black Hegemony manifest itself in the lives of today's African-American youth? And,

under what circumstances can the dimensions of Black Hegemony find application? The balance of this dissertation is devoted to the pursuit of these two questions.

Chapter 8

Conclusions and Implications

The dimensions of Black Hegemony served as forms of cultural capital in the growing up lives of Clifton L. Taulbert, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Margaret Morgan Lawrence. The resources of their African-American culture, family and communities, their belief in God and education as "the" way-to-make-it, and the coping strategies of resilience and perseverance were pervasive and powerful influences that assisted them in their academic achievements and overall educational attainment. It appears that Black Hegemony is "the" vehicle through which these three high achievers were successfully socialized into the world of school and academia. The dimensions of Black Hegemony assisted Taulbert, Gates, and Morgan Lawrence in overcoming the challenges of systematic racism within the larger society, and the educational institutions that they attended. In spite of the challenges of Glen Allan's "under funded and ill-equipped" plantation schools Taulbert was able to succeed at school in remarkable ways (see Chapter Four). In spite of the challenges of living in the segregated community of Piedmont, West Virginia, and its newly integrated school staffed with white teachers influenced by the social, political and racial history of the South, the precocious and efficacious young Gates was able to succeed at school and in remarkable ways (see Chapter Five). And, in spite of the

challenges of growing up in a community located in the Deep South where people were segregated by mind and class, Margaret excelled in school (see Chapter Six).

Though their experiences were unique and varied (see Chapter Seven), dimensions of Black Hegemony were common strands that manifested themselves throughout their growing up lives, and significantly influenced their school successes. Black Hegemony operated as a form of cultural capital that facilitated the development of sufficient ego strength to withstand the psychological assault that some researchers (e.g., Ogbu and Fordham) suggest occurs when African-Americans come face-to-face with societal and institutional racism. The full impact was that it served to protect Taulbert, Gates, and Morgan Lawrence from severe insults of racism and to navigate their way through oppressive living conditions, educational institutions, systems and educational practices that had the very real potential of denying educational opportunity and access. Black Hegemony acted as an enabling force, under girding, influencing and promoting high levels of academic achievement.

While this dissertation focuses on the voice of three high achieving African Americans and their perceptions of significant influences in their schooling and growing up years, it does not attempt to generalize to the larger African-American population. However, this in-depth study of the silhouettes and contours of their lives helps to clarify and refine how Black Hegemony may impact and influence the school successes of contemporary African-American children. The evaluation of their lives, as demonstrated through External Evaluation-an evaluation device central to Labov's Evaluation Model of Narrative, reveals to us their personal, but salient perspectives on African-American student achievement and

the critical variables that influenced their lives. For example, in Taulbert's life he attributes his academic success to a number of factors: "I couldn't forget the ambitions my teachers had for me, and all those times at the colored school when I'd heard about the 'big four' colored role models. Most of all, the hopes of my mother the gentle wisdom of Poppa and the strength and determination of Ma Ponk would remain a part of me as I ventured out of the colored world." (1997, p. 152) "And in numerous talks, I had credited my elders with providing the foundation for my success."(1997, p. 7) The contours of Gates' life are expressed through his perspective and voice in the following quotations: "Mama did not play when it came to her boys, and she wasn't going to let any white woman or man step on her babies' dreams." (p. 92) "Mama was practical as well as proud. Her attitude was that she and Daddy would provide the best for us, so that no white person could put us down or keep us out for reasons of appearance, color aside. The rest was up to us, once we got in those white places." (p. 35) In the Preface section of his autobiography Gates explains to his children his logic for writing this book: "As artlessly and honestly as I can, I have tried to evoke a colored world of the fifties, a Negro world of the early sixties, and the advent of a black world of the later sixties, from the point of view of the boy I was." (p. xvi) And finally, in Margaret Morgan Lawrence's own voice, "These Negro ladies had a tremendous effect on me. . . They were learned, with a concern for you as a person . . . Somehow, if you were a good student, you managed to meet these Negro teachers . . . They *looked* for promising Negro girls . . . there was a strong feeling like that in Harlem." (p. 88) The voice and evaluative perspectives of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence are fundamental to a full

understanding of how dimensions of Black Hegemony might find application in the everyday lives of contemporary African-American youth.

Black Hegemony contributed to the academic achievement and school success of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence during a period of American History when schools and communities were segregated or beginning initial efforts toward integration. Jim Crow laws were still in effect throughout much of the country and had become interwoven into the fabric of how blacks and whites related to each other. Relationships were based, predominantly, on skin color and myths about the supposed genetic superiority of whites and the supposed genetic inferiority of African Americans. States, counties, cities, towns, villages and small communities expended an inordinate amount of time and energy devising laws to separate blacks and whites in marriage, religious worship, schools, housing, employment, public facilitates, and services. It was an era in which African-American students were primarily dependent on the black-hegemonic resources resident within the cultural patterns, and value and belief systems of their communities. African-American parents and their children could not depend on the resource options traditionally available to whites such as academic scholarships, educational loans, nepotism of parents who sat on college boards and influenced the admission of their children, or the endowed preferences given to children when their parents are graduates of Ivy League schools. Rather, the experiences of many African-American children were similar to that of Taulbert. Though Taulbert was class Valedictorian of O'Bannon High, a county administered high school that only coloreds attended, he reports that no academic scholarships were available. "Even though I was the honor graduate, I received no college

scholarship. The scholarships given to O'Bannon graduates went to the football and basketball stars." (p. 151) The very county that financed a yellow school bus to transport colored children like Taulbert "well over 100 miles round trip" each day to school [rather than have them to attend the local white school] couldn't provide an academic scholarship for its highest achiever. Examples like this serve to illustrate the perniciousness of racism, and the role of Black Hegemony in sustaining the "effort optimism" (Ogbu, 1986) of youth like Taulbert.

While the Jim Crow conditions and circumstances of their lives were inherently unfair and summarily unjust, they did provide African-American parents, teachers, churches and communities unlimited access to African-American children. The impact of these restrictive conditions generated fertile ground for the direct transmission of black-hegemonic experiences and traditions, ones that eventuated in the high academic performances of Clifton L. Taulbert, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Margaret Morgan Lawrence. African-American literature and research (Bates & Hudson, 1996; Billingsley, 1992; Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Hale, 1991; Delpit, 1995; Edelman, 1992; Gates, 1995) are replete with marvelous examples of historical and contemporary figures who achieved in school under conditions that parallel or surpass the struggles and challenges of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence. However, the advent of civil rights legislation significantly altered the conditions under which Black Hegemony could exist and be sustained.

The Problematization of Black Hegemony

The second half of the twentieth century brought important legislation that challenges

the efficacy and sustaining influence of Black Hegemony (see Figure 8-1) Several major pieces of legislation have altered the living conditions and circumstances of African Americans in ways that significantly influence the channels through which Black Hegemony has traditionally found expression. For example, The Brown vs. Board of Education decision of 1954 was perceived of as one of the landmark legal, and political victories that protect the rights of African-American students to have access to free public school education. The Supreme Court's decision outlawed separate-but-equal doctrines and the "slow process" that were occurring across the nation to integrate public schools.

Equally pertinent landmark legislation included the passage of the Civil Rights and the Economic Opportunity Acts of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Collectively, they protect the civil rights of African Americans and prohibit discrimination by segregation in places of public accommodation and forbid the denial of access on account of race or color to any public facilities. The advent of these landmark pieces of legislation influenced significant changes within the African-American community. On the surface African-Americans gained status as first-class citizens with all the concomitant legal rights which enabled them to exercise their right to pursue life, liberty and happiness in uninhibited ways. Behaviors rooted deep in the psyche and traditions of African-American epistemology have also been influenced and changed as a result of the landmark legislation. For example, the traditional practice of living within close proximity of family and kinship is somewhat modified as growing numbers of middle-class Blacks move to suburbia, away from metropolitan areas and their extended family networks. Research studies conducted by Tatum (1987) and Billingsley (1992) indicate that these upwardly

mobile Blacks experience feelings of isolation and loneliness. They no longer have ready access to the hegemonic traditions of their past. While the freedom to select housing options of choice symbolizes progress for members of the Black middle-class, it also presents challenges for them as they attempt to assimilate themselves and their children into mainstream White culture that often turns out to be more foreign than originally anticipated. This situation presents challenges that are not easily resolved. For example, Black middle-class parents have to grapple with new and or modified ways of socializing their children into African-American culture and society at large. They face such challenging questions as: How and in what ways does one effectively acculturate and socialize one's children if the traditional supports of family are not at close hand? What is the role of extended-family members and kinship? Do they have a role? And if so, how can they gain and maintain access to the young children that they have traditionally nurtured into adulthood? Does family emphasize education as a holy grail to the same extent as in past generations? Is there a need to? In other words which of the black-hegemonic traits get transplanted to the suburbs and under what conditions? Similar questions have been studied in the research efforts of Tatum (1987). She along with other researchers (i.e., Harriet McAdoo and William Julius Wilson) bring to light class issues that influence the translation of Black Hegemony into contemporary culture.

While these hard fought battles and changed laws are often celebrated by African Americans as legal victories because they opened up avenues for school choice, housing, and employment - all benefits and prerogatives of American citizenship, they present a clear dilemma for the smooth and effective transmission of Black Hegemony as a

significant influence in school attainment forall African-American families of lower, middle and upper class status. The African-American community of yesteryear has become the African-American diaspora of today. Self-contained, homogenous black communities exist in fewer and fewer places. For example, 1990 Census Bureau Statistics report that as of 1994 Blacks increasingly reside in multiple geographic locations.

Inside Central Cities		Outside Central Cities		Non-Metropolitan Areas	
1994	56.1%	1990	30.2%	1990	13.7%
1980	55.5%	1980	21.2%	1980	25.3%

African Americans are now dispersed throughout diverse residential communities, urban, suburban as well as the rural areas of the South. Living within geographic proximity of African-American friends and family is not as common an occurrence as during the Jim Crow and Pre-Civil Rights eras of this century. While Census Bureau Statistics suggest that the majority of African Americans live in urban areas, one cannot conclude that they live in close proximity of family. This situation has the potential of placing Black children at risk for academic achievement. For the close proximity of family created a type of community environment from which emerged the multifaceted and complex dimensions of Black Hegemony.

As mentioned earlier a further complication for the transmission of Black Hegemony arises out of the feelings of isolation and estrangement that African-American families often experience when they move to suburbia. Though the trek to suburbia is increasing among African-American families; they often feel estranged from the relatives, friends and close associates they leave behind. This situation poses a dilemma for the smooth

transmission of black-hegemonic traits.

However, McAdoo (in Tatum, 1987) conducted a research study on the Black middle-class in which she provides a ray of hope for sustaining the influence of Black Hegemony. Tatum's analysis of her study suggests that dimensions of Black Hegemony such as family and kinship ties remain constant as Black families become upwardly mobile. "Regardless of location, the Black middle-class families she [McAdoo] studied had indeed held onto an important part of their cultural roots. The network of family and kin who had helped them achieve their level of success had not been forgotten. Not unlike their low-income counterparts, these men and women kept in touch with their parents, brothers, sisters, and other relatives. They gave and received significant amounts of help in terms of money, child care, and emotional support . . . Aschenbrenner (1975, 1978) also found extended families among middle-income groups in Chicago and in southern Illinois with essentially the same organization as that which she had observed among lower-income Black families. " (pp. 5-6)

A related study conducted by Shimkin, Louie, and Frates (in Tatum, 1987) found that "the extended family network could also serve as a facilitating agent in migration and urbanization as well as fostering educational and economic advancement . . . When Blacks relocate, they are more likely than Whites to move where family and friends have already settled. The family is often the main source of information concerning employment and educational opportunities." (pp. 6-7) Based on these research findings my thesis remains constant: dimensions of Black Hegemony such as family and kinship ties exert a significant influence on the educational attainment of African-American

children. It is a conclusion difficult to ignore, but one that merits further study through longitudinal means so that the processes and mechanisms for the transmittal of Black-hegemonic traits such as this become clarified.

Black families are experiencing the impact of these major pieces of legislation in a number of other significant ways. The family constellation and complexion of African-American families, particularly middle-class, has changed. Increased educational opportunities and employment options have exposed African Americans to an expanded field of social and workplace relationships. This has resulted in growing numbers of interracial relationships, often resulting in marriage. While Black women and men still marry each other in great numbers, they are also marrying out of their race in increasing numbers reports Russell et al. (1992). "A growing number of Blacks are venturing to marry across the racial barrier. In 1970, only 1.5 our of every 1,000 marriages in the United States, or a total of 65,000, were between Blacks and Whites; by 1990, the figure was four out of every 1,000 marriages, or a total of 218,000 . . . Interracial marriage is much more socially acceptable than it was in 1958. More recently, surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago have indicated that tolerance for interracial relationships is increasing. In 1972, 39 percent of Whites said that interracial marriages should be illegal; by 1991, the number had dropped to 17 percent. Acceptance of interracial marriage is even higher among Blacks. In 1980, 20 percent of Blacks thought that interracial marriages should be banned; by 1991, the figure dropped to a low of seven percent." (p. 116) This increasing trend in interracial relationships also places the channels for transmission of Black Hegemony at some measure of risk, for one

of the primary functions of a family is the transmission of its culture, beliefs and customs. Interracial marriages present a challenge as to how the traditional functions are to be carried out. The knowledge of and commitment to transmission of African-American cultural beliefs, patterns of behavior and world-views embedded in Black Hegemony are compromised through such relationships, diminishing opportunities for application of dimensions which historically have served as viable avenues for educational attainment.

Another societal change related to Black children is transracial adoptions. Accessibility to reliable birth-control methods and legal adoptions has resulted in a shortage of White babies available for adoption. Before the early 1970s White families had begun to adopt Black babies in increasing numbers but not without the protest of the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW), who asserted that only Black families could give Black children a positive sense of racial identity. In 1972 NABSW passed a resolution opposing the adoption of Black children, including those who were biracial, by White parents. Despite nearly two decades of such criticism, however, the NABSW reaffirmed its opposition to transracial adoptions in 1989. By 1987, thirty-five states had also passed laws prohibiting the adoption of Black children by White families. The concept, which I support, recognizes the critical role families play in developing group and self-identity. I believe that this was a bold move on the part of NABSW, and one that goes far in ensuring the healthy emotional development and psychological functioning of African-American children. NABSW's position supports the value and primacy of the role of the African-American family in raising its children, and the value and primacy of race as an essential tenet of Black Hegemony as well.

The status of some members of the Black family becomes even more complicated and complex when you add the phenomenon of biracial children. The traditional "one-drop rule" used by the Black community to measure one's racial identity has come into serious question by interracial [Black and White] families. "By definition, the one-drop rule unites all those with Black ancestry." (Russell et al, 1992, p. 74) In previous decades of this century it determined one's sense of racial identity and loyalty. However, Russell et al. explain that "a growing number of biracial and multi cultural Americans are actively challenging this kind of thinking." (p. 75) The growing numbers of biracial families and their children are not always socialized into traditional black culture, patterns and traditions as described in the contours of Taulbert's, Gates' and Morgan Lawrence's lives. Some biracial children and their families are refusing to check a single box for race on forms and applications. "They are also challenging the allocation of only one racial category to African Americans on the U.S. census forms." (Ibid., p. 76) Sometimes children of mixed parentage identify themselves as biracial, instead of black or white. This phenomenon is occurring with such speed that several states (e.g., Georgia and Michigan) are passing or have passed legislation that includes "biracial" as a category of race. Another indication of this growing phenomenon is the increasing number of support groups that now exist. "One such group is the Biracial Family Network of Chicago a nonprofit organization headed by Ramona Douglass, who speaks for many others when she emphasizes that racial identity is a matter of personal choice." (ibid, p. 76) This means that a segment of the Black community that happens to be articulate and political, has now opted to defy the one-drop rule, and create their own definitions of self/ racial

identity. This single option, alone, poses a threat to the possibility that Black Hegemony can be sustained as a viable vehicle for educational attainment. Identification with and adoption of a culture is essential for the effective transmission of it's values, beliefs and patterns of behavior.

Across the nation communities and schools are also experiencing the impact of 50s and 60s civil rights legislation. Increasingly, African-Americans are living in ethnically integrated neighborhoods and attending ethnically mixed schools. Carroll and Carroll (1994) report the following social trend affecting Public Education:

> By the year 2000 one-third of the population under 18 will belong to a minority population group. The current demographic mix of this group is changing and Hispanics are likely to outnumber African Americans in the 21st century. (p.10)

Demographics of two school districts located in very different geographic areas reflect this growing trend. In America's heartland - Lincoln Nebraska, the Charles Culler Middle School reports ". . . the school is 35% minority, with significant numbers of Hispanic, African-American, and Asian students." (Gallagher, 1998, p. 23) The school has also adopted a philosophy that reflects the diversity of its population: "Active involvement of teachers and students in expanding the curriculum is a hallmark of effective multi cultural education . . . 'You live it every day,' says Culler Principal Ross Dirks." (ibid) The student population and Mission Statement of the Evanston/Skokie Public School District 65 also reflects this social trend of integrated neighborhoods and schools. The racial/ethnic demographics read as follows: 44% White; 44% African-American; 8% Hispanic; 4% Asian/Pacific Islander (District 65 *Facts at A Glance*, 1997-98). The

Mission Statement reads:

> The mission of Community Consolidated School District 65 is to assure a quality, integrated educational system where all children understand the value of education and become productive members of a multi cultural multiethnic society. This will be accomplished in an environment that supports equity for students and is characterized by strong instructional leadership from all staff, high expectations for all students, a safe and orderly learning environment, frequent monitoring of student/staff performance, and strong staff, parent, student and community involvement and cooperation. The mission can best be fulfilled by school improvement efforts and share decision making at the local school level, supported by the Board of Education and Superintendent. (District 65 Handbook, 1996)

The Charles Culler Middle School philosophy and Evanston/Skokie School district's mission are probably representative of the increased heterogeneity of many schools around the country. While it represents a clear difference in the temperament and predisposition of the Jim Crow school districts of, Gates and Morgan Lawrence experiences, it is not necessarily an improved situation for African-American children. For example, Kohn (1998) suggests that White parents often undermine school reform and the civil rights gains of the 1950's (e.g., school desegregation) by insisting that their children maintain positions of privilege within their schools. Attitudes such as the following are reported in his recently published article, "Only for My Kid: How Privileged Parents Undermine School Reform". "We like the fact that our kids are in desegregated schools, but the fact that the white kids are in the top classes and the black kids are in the bottom is someone

else's problem." (Kohn, p. 571) Barnes (cited in Kohn), a writer for U.S. News & World Report published an article that revealed similar findings. "Schools that appear integrated from the outside are highly segregated within . . . Honors classes are dominated by whites, regular classes by blacks." (ibid., p. 571).

In the same article Kohn includes excerpts from a 1996 essay in the American Educational Research Journal, describing two middle-class mothers who espoused the ideas of "integrated and inclusive education," but reneged when " . . . it came to the advantages they thought their own children should receive. The self-described liberals tended to support segregated and stratified school structures that mainly benefitted students of the middle class." (p. 571) Kohn's most indicting statement about attitudes of white parents is contained in the following excerpt:

> Unlike the more blatantly racist parents of an earlier generation, who resisted school desegregation policies because they did not want their children in schools with 'colored' children [today's] influential parents are more subtle and savvy in their resistance to detracting efforts that lead to desegregation within schools. They couch their opposition to detracking mainly in terms of the low-track students' behavior -- lack of motivation to learn, lack of commitment to school or interest in higher education, tendency to act out, and so forth -- without making the connection between these behaviors and the low-track students' 'penetration' of an unequal and hierarchical system in which they are at the bottom. (p. 575)

On the surface it appears that African-American children are no longer enrolled in legally segregated schools. However, they are often enrolled in schools that have educational

policies that have similar effects as the segregated schools of the Pre-Civil Rights and Brown vs. Board of Education eras -- unequal opportunity and unequal access to the educational experiences and advantages that lead to high educational attainment. Though Jim Crow Laws belong to a past era and time, African-American children still attend schools that are under funded and ill-equipped. Reports of white parents sabotaging Black children's chances of taking advanced placement and gifted classesares not uncommon. Their goal of maintaining the advantage and privilege status is primary, and overrides issues of social justice and equity.

The educational status of black children is further complicated by the fact that states have failed to provide the necessary funding that would level the playing field of African-American students who attend all or predominantly black schools. States, responsible for generating funds for appropriate educational experiences for all its children [Black and White], remain challenged as how to effectively distribute resources in equitable ways that ensure that no class or race of people are disadvantaged. Federal and state legislation prohibits separate but equal schooling, but fail to provide the necessary financial allocations for this to occur. Consequently, historical issues of parity, equity and equal opportunity "remain a constant" in the lives of contemporary African-American children. Thus, the continuing need for Black Hegemony as a viable vehicle for facilitating academic achievement.

Black teachers have played a significant role in the academic lives of African-American children. African-American literature is rife with testimonies of students who benefitted from the personal interest, attention shown and instructional strategies applied. Almost

always, black teachers are credited with the success of their grads. So it is especially important to include the critical voice and perceptions of Black teachers in this analysis of the problemization of Black Hegemony. The views and perspectives of many Black teachers are expressed in Michele Foster's 1997 publication, Black Teachers on Teaching. Their reflections suggest that Black children have been placed at a decided disadvantage in attending integrated schools:

> I got disillusioned with integration because I could not get to my people and tell them all the things that they needed to know. I couldn't beat into their minds that to compete with a white kid on an equal basis was not enough." (Everett Dawson, p. 7)

When the children were integrated into white schools, they lost something. Integration has helped in some ways, but it has hurt our black children in some ways. Now instead of seeing black children winning prizes for their achievements, you see them all in special education classes. This has caused them to lose their pride, their self-esteem. They have been pushed back, as far as leadership is concerned. Instead of being taught to lead, they are being taught to follow. (Ruby Middleton Forsythe, pp. 33-34)

I've taught in a segregated school and a desegregated school in the same town. If I had to compare the experiences I would say in the black schools teachers had to do a lot more work, but our kids were appreciated more .(Etta Joan Marks, p. 87)

The experiences, insights and voice of these elder and veteran teachers imply that African-American children faired better in segregated schools staffed by black teachers. Narratives and descriptive testimonies contained within much of African-American literature support this conclusion.

Life for many contemporary African-American children is significantly different, not necessarily better or improved, but different from the Pre-Civil Rights and Brown vs. Board of Education eras. Many African-American children live in integrated neighborhoods, are taught in school systems that have made attempts at integration, and are taught by teachers of diverse ethnic persuasions. [Unfortunately though, they do not have the same level of access to black teachers as in previous eras.] Foster (1997) reports that there is a major reduction in the numbers of African-American teachers due to state policies such as the ones in Georgia and Maryland. "Georgia while officially bemoaning the dearth of black teachers, is presently considering a change from a state certification test which eliminated 40 percent of the African-American teacher candidates to one which will eliminate 70 percent. When I was in Baltimore a few years, a group of white educational leaders apparently believed that almost *any* white person could do a better job educating black children than the black teachers who then formed the majority in the system. Consequently, policies were implemented to give hiring preference to predominantly white Groups who had not been educated as teachers over African-American candidates who had completed at least four years of teacher education at one of the local historically black colleges or universities." (p. x)

Other examples of systems and institutional structures that are influencing the decline of black teachers can be seen in Delpit's (1995) essay, "Rethinking Teacher Education for Diversity." This essay is based on a cross-cultural research project completed with a number of African American, Native American and Native Alaskan teachers. The purpose of her research was to explore their attitudes about their pre-service and in-service teacher

education, and their experiences as teachers. Her findings reveal that the numbers of teachers of color are declining while, at the same time, the numbers of students of color are on the increase. By sharing the voices of these teachers of color, she provides insight into causal factors for this decline. Many felt that personal accounts of their own experiences were not validated in their teacher education programs. A key issue for all three ethnic groups was that they were members of cultures for whom narrative is the preferred means of communication. They felt that their personal experiences, or narratives, were less valued than opinions voiced by others who backed their words with research and theory. One African-American teacher summed up this situation by saying, "if you can't quote Vygotsky . . . then you don't have any validity to speak about your own kids." (Delpit, p. 109)

These same teachers also struggled with negative racial and cultural stereotypes and attitudes. They reported instances of discrimination at the university level by professors and classmates. The most common experience of bias in teacher training was that of subtle discrimination. "Two of the teachers reported overt discrimination from their professors, who implied they were not sufficiently competent to complete the university program. One black teacher was told, for example, "You're not really capable of doing this work. You're only here because somebody paid your way." (Delpit, p. 113) The teachers also spoke of challenges based on negative racial or cultural stereotypes by parents and co-teachers. For example, "Five teachers felt discriminated against at one time or another by their colleagues, ranging from stereotyping (one black teacher complained that during student teaching her cooperating teacher wanted to know if her

family was on welfare) to feelings of isolation." (Delpit, p. 112) One Native American-woman described her feeling of total isolation in a school where she was the only nonwhite. She said, "I even think some teachers pick on my students because they're my kids. I feel so excluded." (Delpit, p. 113)

The decline of black teachers, influenced by factors detailed above appears to be a national trend, and it is especially grievous to this researcher, for black children benefit tremendously from being taught by teachers who possess similar world perspectives, cultural orientations and beliefs as theirs. Black students benefit from close and continuous contact with the dedicated black teachers who have in past and present eras demonstrated, over and over again, their interest in and commitment to their students' academic and social success. It seems to me that their presence in the classroom is "a" critical element to the transmission of black-hegemonic traits.

Delpit says, "Patricia Graham, then dean of Harvard's Graduate School of Education, puts it succinctly: 'Most teachers who teach today's children are white; tomorrow's teaching force will be even more so'." (Delpit, p. 105) This fact makes the case for increasing the ranks of black teachers even greater. However, accomplishing this task is quite the challenge in contemporary society because racism, discrimination and bigotry are covertly practiced. While, the Jim Crow Laws of past eras are behind us; the need for white privilege and advantage remains and finds itself expressed in such situations as the dismantling of Affirmative Action policies as has recently occurred in the state of California. This single instance of a retreat from the small gains of the 1950's and 1960's civil rights legislation serves to discourage minority enrollments in educational institutions

that have previously been inaccessible to African Americans, and employment in workplace settings that have been the exclusive domain of whites. The danger of this retreat is that it sets a model and precedence for similar types of institutions, and before you know it, the "illusion of inclusion"- a colloquial expression that many professional Black Americans use to describe their assimilation into nonsegregated work place and living environments- is present and operable, and "all" vestiges of progress have disappeared.

Foster's (1997) study of black teachers also reveals that there is a declining number of black teachers (nation wide). She states, "the number of black teachers had become so small and was projected to remain insignificant, some referred to them as an 'endangered species'. According to the 1990 census black teachers represented only 8 percent of all teachers. Their numbers were declining at exactly the same time that black students comprised the majority in many urban school districts" (p. xlix). The research findings of Ladson-Billings (1994) presents a similar profile. African-American teachers make up less than 5% of the total public school teaching population, yet African Americans represent 30% of the general school population, and 70% in the major cities. These statistical facts present major challenges for the sustaining influence of Black Hegemony as a vehicle for academic achievement.

Historically, Black teachers like elder Madge Scott have played decisive roles in motivating and inspiring the academic achievements of Black children. Elder Scott's reflections provide clear description:

The teachers taught us a lot about our own race even though the school board

prescribed a curriculum that didn't include anything much about black people. We sang the Negro National Anthem, 'Lift Every Voice and Sing,' before every class and assembly. All of the teachers knew that the supervisor or superintendent only came around every five orsix months and when they came everything had to be exactly so. Any information we were learning about black people would be set aside and all the teachers made sure we were working on the official curriculum. When people think about black teachers, they don't see them as subversive, but these teachers were. Because they wanted us to know about our own race, they taught us things about ourselves that weren't in the books. (Foster, p. 38)

Community life is considerably different, "another hidden cost of desegregation." (Foster, p. xxxix) Bernadine B. Morris, a black school teacher of elder status, interprets the change in community from an instructional perspective:

Busing at that time meant closing the schools in black neighborhoods and sending the black kids to the white areas. They closed all the black schools. Greenbriar School where I once worked is now a recreation center. Murrow Peak, a school that the black community fought to have built for twenty years, was closed even thought it was fairly new. Then integration came. Now Murrow Peak is a policy academy. These schools no longer exist because they were located in black neighborhoods. They built new schools in predominantly white neighborhoods rather than keep those in the black community. The idea was to get the schools out of black neighborhoods-and they did a good job of it. (Foster, p. xxxix)

A similar perspective is offered by Foster in evaluative comments such as the following:

"These teachers agonize over the disintegration of urban and rural black communities, the rampant materialism of the society, and the devastating effect these condition have had on the pupils they teach. Joel Vanderall describes her school community:

> Many of my students come from neighborhoods that are devastated, communities in which drugs are rampant, where people haven't got the money they need to survive and they see no way out. Before, black people had more stability, jobs, and some hope. But now welfare has created a permanent class of expendable people without hope who can always be used as scapegoats by the politicians and the larger society. (p. xlvii)

Without question civil rights legislation brought a lot of civic and social freedoms, educational opportunities and increased life choices, but it brought both danger and loads of promise. In spite of these gains, African-American children still don't enjoy the same degree of access to educational opportunity as do White students. As a consequence there remains a real need and justification for continuation and perpetuation of dimensions of Black Hegemony. It served as a powerful force in the lives of many as conveyed through the voice and evaluative perspectives of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence; it can in the lives of contemporary African-American youth. However, the challenge is to find the appropriate vehicles for its expression. Questions such as how to and under what circumstances do families and schools apply the dimensions of Black Hegemony in the increasingly integrated communities, families and classroom environments of today. Which of the traditional black hegemonic dimensions evident in the lives of Taulbert, Gates, and Morgan Lawrence can be assimilated into the integrated social, cultural and

classroom environments of contemporary America? Which pedagogical practices can be adopted by white teachers who are now in the majority as classroom educators? Which of the traditional familial practices resident within the Black community can be adopted by parents engaged in interracial relationships? It is in search of responses to these queries that I turn the balance of this dissertation.

Contemporary Responses/Solutions?

Dimensions of Black Hegemony described in this dissertation might be resident in other cultures, too, but they have nonetheless been of exceptional importance in the culture and school experiences of African Americans. They provide for me answers to the question of how African-American children achieved in spite of the pains of racial oppression. While much of this dissertation has focused on the lives of three individuals living during Jim Crow and Pre-Civil Rights era; the findings that emerged from the examination of their lives provides guidance for the development and design of instructional strategies, curriculum content, and school policies that provide educational support and advantage for the educational aspirations of contemporary African-American children. The life stories of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence contain sufficient narrative detail to inspire and influence the professional practice and professional imaginations of several influential publics: classroom teachers, curriculum coordinators, school administrators (i.e., principals and superintendents), educational researchers, academicians, legislative policy makers and parents

The utilization of Black Hegemony as a vehicle for educational attainment is problematized by the many areas of civil and social change the country has experienced.

However, these changes do not preclude the expression of Black Hegemony in these new and challenging situations that black children and their families find themselves in. I have chosen to target my focus on the two areas that I believe provide the most promise for promoting and sustaining the multifaceted dimensions of Black Hegemony: the school community that symbolizes education and "the hope for a better life," and the African-American family, as Billingsley (1992) insinuates "they have always been the backbone of the black community . . . ." (p. 14) My selection of these two areas were inspired by the voice and evaluative interpretations of Taulbert, Gates, and Morgan Lawrence as well as my own personal interpretations of the life experiences that appeared to have the greatest influence on their overall academic achievements. The autobiographies of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence devote an exceptional amount of space to stories of family and family influence, and equally striking evaluative comments emerge from their memoirs of school life and teacher-pupil relationships. These realities also support my rationale for focusing on these two areas as arenas for discussion.

School community and classroom settings: Black Hegemony, a framework for schools' of the 90s

The works of Ladson-Billings, Hale, Banks, Delpit, and Foster, provide some tentative solutions. Delpit's perspective provides a paradigm or interpretive framework for the inclusion of Black Hegemony in contemporary educational settings. She posits that mainstream society must be ever conscious of the need to be respectful of "others" perspectives by becoming ". . . vulnerable enough to allow our world to turn upside down in order to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into our own consciousness."

(Delpit p. 47) This means that all teachers must become more sociocentric, considering the notion that multiple perspectives exists. And, as a consequence they must acknowledge and be responsive to the peculiar needs of each child.

Delpit argues that teachers must seek out the perspective of others through an approach similar to the one mentioned by Ladson-Billings, that is raising hard questions about "discrimination and the voicelessness of people of color." Delpit contends that all people have the right to have their voices heard *and* their opinions and perspectives valued. She believes that if this perspective is adopted, particularly in our teacher education programs, that society can begin to break down the cultural barriers that prohibit the active and full participation of students of color [African American] in their education. This is the paradigmatic thought that I support, and that seems to run through the pedagogical approaches of educators such as Banks, Hale and hooks whose curriculum approaches provide possible solution to the dilemma of where, how and under what conditions Black Hegemony can find expression. The works of each of the aforementioned persons are contained in the following paragraphs.

Multicultural education, as described by Banks (1996), appears to be an approach through which Black Hegemony can find contemporary expression. It's multifaceted dimensions address some of the issues teachers face in working with ethnically diverse classroom population such as: prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and content dimension. Prejudice reduction focuses on strategies teachers might use to develop more positive feelings within themselves about children from different racial groups. Equity pedagogy occurs when teachers learn effective techniques for facilitating academic

achievement in students from ethnic populations different from their own. And content dimension occurs when teachers integrate into their subject areas data from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts and principles on a regular basis. Banks' reading on the status of multi cultural education is promising for the perpetuation and sustaining influence of Black Hegemony.

He reports that increasing numbers of teachers have studied the dimensions mentioned above, that there is a growing market for text, and that some colleges and universities have revised their general core curriculum to include this perspective. If his reading of the situation is accurate, I hold out some hope that Black Hegemony might find some nesting ground within the tenets of this educational approach, and that the outcome will result in an increase in the cultural and pedagogical competence of all teachers working with African American students. Increased cultural and pedagogical-teacher competence will most likely result in increased academic outcomes for African-American students.

Janice Hale, African-American scholar and educator, has analyzed African-American literature (1988) and finds that their are many stories of struggle and triumph, stories that provide curriculum content (i.e., core knowledge) for the pedagogical strategies proposed by Delpit, Ladson-Billings, and Banks. The stories can be integrated into curricular knowledge and experiences of black and white children. They should also be adopted in the strategic planning processes of school boards as they visit or revisit their institutional missions and goals. Only then will they have the far-reaching impact of influencing policy, administrative decisions and classroom practice. The implications would be so far

reaching as to include all professional domains working directly with children (e.g., classroom teachers and social workers), planning and administering programs for children (curriculum coordinators, principals, superintendents and boards), and those providing information (e.g., educational researchers) and goods and services for children (book publishers, policy makers including board members and legislators). What follows is a list of suggestions inspired by African-American researchers included in this thesis, and the experiences of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence. The professionals in each of these domains could incorporate any number of these suggestions as helpful guides to their respective professional practice.

- Classroom teachers and curriculum coordinators should be familiar with the vast amount of literature on African-American heroes and heroines. It tells the stories of persons who emerged from humble beginnings and suffered racial indignities but managed to triumph and become school achievers.

- Classroom teachers and curriculum coordinators should integrate this literature across the curriculum so that students have an image of African Americans as school achievers.

- Teachers and social workers should be aware of the value-added dimension of a belief in God as a means for handling stress and anxiety, and should explore ways to infuse it into the school curriculums whether in after school programs (i.e., Boys and Girls Clubs) or Saturday day schools.

- School administrators need to forge formal partnerships with home and church communities so that students get the notion that education is seamless.

- Teachers and social workers should become aware of and sensitive to the value of resiliency and perseverance as hegemonic traits that are an integral part of the African-American experience. They should value them as important coping strategies for surviving and triumphing in a society that is still struggling with issues of white supremacy, white advantage and maintaining status quo.

- School administrators, school social workers and psychologists should realize that community mentors and peer support group can be an effective means of helping

children to obtain and sustain a sense of positive identity when they are in racial integrated settings and their sense of ethnicity is challenged.

Any number of these suggestions, if adopted and implemented in a positive spirit, can serve to facilitate academic achievement in African-American children.

African-American educator bell hooks (1996) calls for a "renewal and rejuvenation in teaching practices" based on an open learning community where professors and children "genuinely" value everyone's voice, where differences in race and nationality are recognized and multiple perspectives are assumed. She speaks of a pedagogy that has been long practiced by African-American teachers, "Engaged Pedagogy." This practice is echoed in the teacher narratives of Edourad Plummer and Ruby Middleton Forsythe:

Plummer says: "The education I received in segregated schools was a good one, primarily because of the interest of the teachers, teachers who are willing to go above and beyond the job. That experience is what has made me do the same thing in my teaching career . . . They went out of their way with you as a person, to give you advice, to help you, to talk about your family problems, or personal problems. They were not afraid to help you. These teachers wanted you to move ahead, they believed in you, and you were able to believe in them . . . If teachers are there just for the dollar, then they are not going to bother. But if they are there as human beings, then teachers can't avoid teaching values. (Foster, 1997, pp. 101-102)

Black teachers were involved, committed and invested in the school success of black children for their success represented the success of the race. Therefore, teachers felt an extra responsibility to teach with an "engaged" like pedagogy that they were certain would

result in the children's success. And most often, it did. According to Plummer, the emotional and social development of a child was as much a part of curriculum instruction as math, science and the arts. They were so inextricably intertwined that it was difficult to perceive of them as separate units of instruction. Rather, a child's personal and social development was an integral part of the curriculum, resulting in a focus on the development of the whole child (i.e., cognitive, social, emotion). Plummer was so influenced by the approach that he adopted it as a central part of his pedagogy when he began teaching years later. I believe that Plummer's experience was not an anomaly. Rather, it was the typical hegemonic experience of most African-American children, a significant influence in their academic achievement.

A teacher of elder status, Ruby Middleton Forsythe, offers further insight into the"engaged" teaching styles of black teachers:

> This school is run like Miss Montgomery's, the one I went to as a child. It's like a family, the first thing I do is to try to become a mother to all of them. I tell them, "as long as you are here with me, I'm your mama until you go back home, and when you go back home, you go to your other mother . . . You have to be tender but firm and positive . . . It is impossible to discipline or teach children unless the children believe you care about them. You've got to care, and you've got to be positive and determined. (Foster, 1997, p. 31)

In the reflections above we can see "affect" and "Engaged Pedagogy" situated in thehegemonic experiences and belief systems of African-American teachers.

The paradigmatic perspectives of Delpit, Banks, Hale and hooks, and the unwavering

commitment of black teachers to their students' success provide possible solutions that enhance teachers' cultural and pedagogical competencies. The chances that Black Hegemony will continue as an important influence in the school success of African-American children are greatly increased with the presence of Black teachers. The school setting was an important part of Taulbert's, Gates' and Morgan Lawrence's community. Their individual stories indicate that teachers played an influential role in their school successes. Because their analysis acknowledge teacher contribution, I think it is an important inclusion for the exploration of solutions to the dilemma of how and by whom dimensions of Black Hegemony will be sustained.

Taulbert and Morgan Lawrence speak fondly of their teachers. It is their analysis that leads me to conclude that concerted efforts need to be made by state legislatures, University Teacher Education programs, and local school districts to increase the pool of Black teachers. I contend, along with a host of other African Americans, that children's access to Black teachers can make a siginificant differences in their achievement outcomes, particularly when they use an Afrocentric-type approach. Special programs, funded with public dollars (federal and state), should be designed to attract Black professionals into the teaching profession. And, universities should work collaboratively with these bodies to develop and design professional development programs for the express purpose of increasing the pool of African-American teachers prepared to respond to the growing minority population of students, a large percentage of whom are African-American.

White teachers, and teachers of other ethnic persuasions can also play an important

role in supporting and affirming the ethnic identity of African-American children. The provision of support and affirmation can be accomplished in a number of ways. Institutional programs sponsored by local school districts can provide long-term in service and professional development experiences focused on issues of social justice, curriculum equity, effective and alternative pedagogy for working African-American children. A companion program designed to provide classroom demonstration, role modeling and mentoring can serve as a helpful aid to White teachers who might need support in the application and delivery of such instructional strategies.

Curricular Equity as Part of the Response/Solution?

A very different but related solution to the problematization of Black hegemony can be found in the movement toward curricular equity. Increasingly, black educators and administrators recognize that the typical school curriculum tends to " deculturalize children of minority groups making them part of the common Euro-American learning, perceiving, valuing, and acting community. (Cross, 1995) Cross argues that the dominance of White Hegemony in American society permeates the school landscape " . . . despite efforts to create multicultural curriculums. African-American children still spend too many years in school without seeing their own race, culture, or ethnic group reflected in their studies." The development of alternative and independent schools, and Afro-centric curriculums have been the response of a number of African-American educators toward curricular equity. They bring to mind the school experiences of Clifton Taulbert and Margaret Morgan Lawrence. Taulbert learned about the 'big four' African-American achievers from his colored teachers. Morgan Lawrence was connected with professionally

trained teachers [Negro-Ladies in Harlem] who mentored her. While there is no evidence that their instruction was a conscious attempt to reach curricular equity, the net effect was the same. The school success of Taulbert and Morgan Lawrence was positively influenced by positive images of and experiences with successful Black men and women.

African-American youth of today experience similar success outcomes in alternative schools designed to bridge the gap between culture and Euro-American curriculum. The Malcolm X Academy in Milwaukee, Wisconsin uses African and African-American culture to support academic achievement.

The school district's mandated curriculum is adapted and enriched with African American culture and heritage . . . it is enriched, strengthened, and diversified as children study African-American entrepreneurs, careers in which African Americans are under represented, and the communities in which students now live. (Cross, 1995, p. 79)

The Malcolm X Academy is one of many such schools that have "slowly spread from mostlyprivate academies to public schools" (Viadero, 1996) around the country: Atlanta, Cleveland,Detroit, Kansas City, Oakland, Washington. These schools all have curriculums that are Afrocentric in focus. They arose out of a recognition that adoption and application of the Afrocentric approach are a viable means of achieving curricular equity. Performance outcomes have resulted in improved self esteem, school retention and academic achievement. The success of these schools as indicated by standardized measures lend support to my argument that the hegemonic experiences of African Americans is a significant influence in the achievement of African-American children.

Studies have been released that support the effectiveness of the Afro-centric approach to schooling. In 1994, an independent consulting firm hired by Milwaukee's school district found that students performed above the national norm, at every grade level--and better than district students overall--on California Achievement Test. The research of Lee et al. (1990) provide similar findings:

One important environment for the articulation and implementation of African-Centered pedagogical principles have been the independent Black school as embodied through the Council of Independent Black Institutions (CIBI). Since the early 1970s, hundreds of community-based schools across the country have developed and implemented a challenging curriculum which incorporates African and African-American history and culture. Students in these community-based institutions demonstrate a high level of mastery of academic skills as evaluated by standardized achievement tests. (Ratteray, 1986-1989)

The 21-year record of success of Marva Collin's Westside Preparatory School is yet anotherexample of the proven success of these schools. She has received world wide recognition on the success of her schools (she now has three locations, two in Chicago and one in Cincinnati, Ohio). "After two profiles, the television news show 60 Minutes recently validated what Marva Collins knew all along--her children don't fail, not just standardized tests, her children don't fail in the major course--Life." (Ebony, December 1996. The perspective of Collins is consistent with the narrative perspectives of the African-American teachers cited earlier in this section and recorded in Ladson-Billings' novel, The Dreamkeepers. Public, private and independent Afro-centric schools provide a

response to the challenge of where, how and under what conditions Black Hegemony can be sustained. These institutions provide an atmosphere of acceptance. Black children need not apologize or justify their presence in these institutions, for they are designed to support their growth and academic achievement in an environment staffed by African-American faculty who are committed to the development of the total self (i.e., personal, social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual). The curriculum is designed to promote values akin to those embodied within the tenets of Black Hegemony such as education as the way-to-make-it, respect for family, elders and community.

It appears from research conducted by Banks (1996) and Ladson-Billings (1994) that shades and tones of Afrocentric education have filtered through to a variety of contemporary educational settings such as public, private, alternative, and independent Black schools. Because most classroom teachers are white there is both a danger and promise in this movement. The danger lies in the possibility that this curricular approach might possibly be sabotaged by some white teachers in the same manner that some white middle-class parents are doing in the integrated schools that African-American children attend. On the other hand, the promise is that hooks' principles of "Engaged Pedagogy" are already at work, increasing the potential for African-American children to learn in positive atmospheres that respect them as individuals, promote their general well being, and support their interest in learning. They provide promise for the continuous expression of Black Hegemony in Black school settings, and integrated school settings where white and black teachers have a knowledge of and commitment to African-American history.

African-American Families as Part of the Response/Solution?

There are many different familial structures among African-American families as demonstrated through the lives of Taulbert (extended family as represented through Great-grandparents and Great-aunt, and blended family as represented through his mother's marriage and continued participation in parenting though living a few houses away), Gates (nuclear and frequent participation of extended family) and Morgan Lawrence (nuclear family with assistance of grandmother and aunts). No single structure or type represents every African-American family, and no single class status (i.e., lower, middle, upper) represents every African-American family. Unfortunately, research literature over represents the urban poor and rural families who most often constitute lower-class status. This lends itself to a distorted and lopsided view of the African-American family, one that leads the public with the general sense that "all" African-American families are poor. Fortunately, a reversal of this trend can be seen in the study of upwardly mobile and middle-class Blacks by such researchers such as Bates & Hudson (1996), Billingsley (1972), Russell et al. (1992) and Tatum (1987). Tatum suggests that "there are as many different familial forms among Afro-Americans as there are different experiential and phenomenal realities [as portrayed in the lives of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence] . . . since no one segment can represent the whole, our understanding of families in general, and Black families in particular, requires that this diversity be acknowledged." (p. 2)

African-American families of lower-class status tend to reside in metropolitan communities, and in closer proximity to the network of resources that generally constitute what I've referred to in this thesis as Black Hegemony. This is not to imply that these

familial types and the socialization processes they use to rear their children have not been impacted by the changed legislation discussed earlier in this section. On the contrary, the diaspora effect is present within these communities as well. However, with less reported visibility than that of more affluent or upwardly mobile families. Their family and kinship ties are within reasonable reach; their churches, schools and community resources are dispersed, but not inaccessible. Today's African-American children, like Taulbert, do not always attend neighborhood schools; they are often bused to achieve racial integration. As we know from an earlier discussion there is the great possibility that once children are enrolled in these non-segregated schools equal access and equal opportunity is not always the experience. Many African-American children find themselves tracked into lower levels of instruction, are placed in special education classes in alarming numbers, and are taught by White teachers who do not always have the same world-view, level of commitment and investment, and pedagogical style of instruction as described by Black teachers of elder and veteran status in earlier sections of this chapter. These conditions place African-American children whose families are of lower-class status at risk of academic failure.

The numbers of African Americans living in suburban areas are increasing. In Tatum's (1987) research she reports that a little less than 25% or six million of the 26.5 million Blacks reside insuburban areas that are "racially mixed and located near central cities." Her research findings are consistent with the U.S. Census findings cited earlier in this chapter. Tatum's study of thesefamilies include an examination of a number of questions, the one most pertinent to the discussion of Black Hegemony and how it manifests itself in contemporary society is as follows: "What does it mean to be a middle-class Black parent

living, working, and raising children in the midst of a predominantly White community?" Tatum doesn't pretend to have a clear and definitive response, but her research has focused on the social stresses of living in isolation from one's ethnic community and the refugee-like status that is sometimes assumed when Black families are one of a few who integrate White communities. She asserts, "certainly Black families, 'perennial refugees' in American society, vary in their vulnerability to racist conditions and environmental stress. Each family develops its own internal coping strategies for dealing with racial oppression." (p. 9)

However, her in-depth research on 10 Black families in one California community reveal some trends that provide possible answers to this question, and that appear to have "immediate relevance for Black families regardless of where they live." (p.3) The persistence of racism continues to be a reality no matter where African Americans live, work, and attend school as addressed in the Problematization section in this chapter. These unfortunate realities of continued and persistent racism and oppression might well provide the motivation for middle-class Black families to hold on to their supportive kin network as well as other dimensions of Black Hegemony. McAdoo's (cited in Tatum, 1987) research on 178 middle-class Black families living in Washington, D.C. and Maryland provides similar conclusions. For example, her empirical study reveals that "regardless of its location, the Black middle-class family . . . held onto an important part of their cultural roots. The network of family and kin who had helped them achieve their level of success had not been forgotten. . . . Not unlike their low-income counterpart, these men and women kept in close touch with their parents, brothers, sisters, and other

relatives. They gave and received significant amounts of help in terms of money, child care, and emotional support." (p. 5) Similar research conducted by McAdoo in 1975 (cited in Tatum) also revealed that many middle-class Blacks remain connected through visitations, attending family events and celebrations, and continued to support elderly parents or provided occasional help.

Tatum's 1981 study of middle-class Black families also revealed evidences of attempts to cope with the realities of racism by developing an extension of the family support system in the workplace setting and among friends.

> For women with strong labor force histories, a category which certainly includes Black women, co-worker friends, both male and female, are important potential sources of support. Some non-kin relationships become so close that they fulfill family-type functions. Friends become fictive kin, honored with titles such as 'play mother' (or father, sister, brother, etc.) to indicate the closeness of the relationship. The development of fictive kin relationships as a coping strategy is of particular relevance to the issue of Black families who may be geographically and/or emotionally distant from their kinship systems. Co-workers friends and fictive kin represent the evolution of possible alternatives to the extended support system for those who might need them. (p. 10)

It appears that middle-class Blacks have found creative and dynamic ways to tighten and expand the boundaries of Black family in those instances where they live in predominantly White communities. This appears promising to me. It provides a clearer and cleaner avenue for the expression of this dimension of Black Hegemony, and perhaps for the

transmission of others such as the resilience and perseverance African-American children seem to need in order to function well in segregated and non-segregated school environments.

These trends as reported through the research of Tatum and McAdoo indicate the adaptive nature of Black families, and their continued consciousness of their role as the primary vehicle through which cultural values are conveyed. Dimensions of Black Hegemony appear to remain evident in the lives of Black families of middle as well as lower-class status.

Societal changes (as identified in the problematization section of this chapter) have caused African-American families to change, assimilate and adapt in new and creative ways, some of which are revealed in the research findings of Tatum and McAdoo. Other adaptive changes reveal themselves in the academic debate over "class and race consciousness" among middle-class Black families. The research work of W. J. Wilson (cited in Tatum, 1987) suggests that some middle-class Black families have developed a sense of "class consciousness," that supersedes their race consciousness, and that this class consciousness is often used in determining life opportunities. He argues that increased employment opportunities and life style choices of middle-class Blacks have made class more important that race, and that oppression and discrimination are no longer racial in nature, but direct expressions of class. And finally, he maintains the position that "the widening class division between the Black poor and the affluent allows class issues to compete with the issue of race in the way Blacks develop or maintain a sense of group membership." (p. 120)

This argument is defensible to a degree. However, it doesn't account for the persistent racism that Blacks experience in workplace, housing markets, and school settings. Tatum's (1987) findings on her research of the 10 California families reveal their "expressed concerns about their treatment on the job and their children's treatment at school . . . these concerns stem from racial membership rather than class ." (p. 121) Willie's examination of middle-class Black families (cited in Tatum, 1987) reveals similar conclusions. "When all things were equal, including age, sex, occupation, and other characteristics, Black and other minority males received an annual income that was 15 to 20 percent less than that received by White men . . . I call this income discrepancy an unfair tax that qualified minorities pay for not being White." (pp. 120-121)Another example from Tatum's research of middle-income Black parents illustrates their concerns for their children's social and emotional well being in nonsegregated school settings:

> All of the parents were asked how satisfied they were with their children's educational experiences. . . Though there is variation in their responses, ranging from very satisifed to not at all satisfied, it is very clear that, because of their concerns about racism within the community, most of these parents can not evaluate their child's academic experience without also considering their child's social experience in any particular school setting, and that both require the parents' careful monitoring [Similarly Gates' experiences in the integrated schools of Piedmont required the careful monitoring of his mother, Pauline].

A friend once said to me, concerning the public schools, "All I ask is that they don't hurt my child." Ideally, the school experience will be stimulating educationally, and

growth- producing socially, but in a world where ideal conditions are often hard to find, the bottom line may, in fact, be this: "Please don't do any damage--to her intellectual curiosity, to her developing self-esteem. Please don't hurt my child." Probably all parents feel this way, but when your child is Black and operating in a mostly White environment, the words take on special meaning." (p. 71)

Most families, whether of middle or lower-class status still characterize their concerns in terms of race not class. Consequently, I am forced to conclude that race has primacy in the lives of most Black families regardless of class orientation and status. The primacy of race provides sound argument for the continued transmission of dimensions of Black Hegemony, family and kinship ties in particular.

In spite of continuous racist assaults, and far-reaching societal changes the black family has adjusted and survived. Hill's (1971) pacesetting research uncovered five strengths endemic to black families, one of which is its adaptability. Billingsleys' (1992) research of black families concluded the same. "They adapt their structures and their patterns of operation according to the pressures and opportunities of the larger society in their constant effort to meet the needs of their members." (p. 19) While African Americans benefitted somewhat from the Civil Rights legislation of the late 1950's and 1960's, the Great Migration of blacks from the South to northern and western states, and 20th century technological developments (e.g., the release of Blacks from the drudgery of hard physical labor to the efficiency of automation and computerization) they still struggle with issues of racism, discrimination, societal inequities and the illusion of equality. For example, Billingsley contends that "even in the face of such progress, however, the racial factor

persists; it looms large. Blacks benefit less from the positive consequences of technological change than whites and suffer more from the negative consequences of such change" (p. 131) The example he gives to illustrate his points comes from statistics on Infant mortality. He reports that Infant mortality rates remain constant for Blacks, while during the same period they were reduced from 43 per 1,000 live births to ten per 1,000 live births for whites. Perry (1996) provides a similar example of the persistence of racism:

When I reflect on my experiences growing up in the segregated South and my daughter's experiences growing up in the North, I am forced to come to terms with what it means to exist under the gaze . . . Throughout many of my years growing up in Birmingham in the segregated South, I could not try on shoes before purchasing them. My daughter can now try on shoes across the country. However, when she enters Copley Place, an upscale mall in Boston, she and her African-American friends are likely to be followed. I remember vividly the boards on buses with the sign "Please do not move board," which indicated that white people were supposed to sit in front of the board and Black people behind it. Last summer, while my daughter was visiting family and friends in Chicago, she boarded a bus to go from downtown Chicago to the near Northside. She was struck by the fact that as she entered the bus and approached the vacant seats, the white people seated nearby, one by one, quite deliberately put their packages on the empty seats. (p. 13)

Despite the persistence of racism "the family is the source and the reflection of African American culture . . . It has been the source of strength, resilience, and survival"

(Willis, 1988 pp. 132-133), and as such I believe it is a central vehicle for the ongoing transmission of Black Hegemony. The primary socialization task of the African-American family is instilling in its members a sense of who they are. This includes knowledge of African heritage, the history of the American experience, the traditional belief in education as the way-to-make-it, as well as inspiration and a spiritual faith that assist in the development of coping strategies for dealing with life's obstacles and struggle. It requires the vigilance of families (e.g., nuclear, extended, blended, adopted, biracial) who can interpret and give meaning to acts of discrimination. This act prevents children from personalizing, internalizing and blaming themselves and their families and race for discrimination. It requires that families act as staunch advocates and emissaries for their children, intervening in school settings, and in other matters that threaten their equal opportunities for academic achievement.

Dr. Sara Lawrence Lightfoot and Janice Hale provide examples of how African-American families can play out their role as vigilant emissaries. In 1989 Dr. Sara Lawrence Lightfoot led a major panel on educational issues that produced a statement that serves as an appropriate philosophical frame for parental involvement:

> We hold this truth to be self evident: all black children are capable of learning and achieving. The panel set forth a point of view and a strategy on behalf of the entire black community:
>
> What we must demand is this: that the schools shift their focus from the supposed deficiencies of the black child--from the alleged inadequacies of black family life -- to the barriers that stand in the way of academic success. (in Billingsley, pp.174-75)

This is not a new position or stance for African-American families for historically parents have been in the forefront acting as the leaders and emissaries of their children's education. Their passionate commitment to education as "the" way to a better life is an integral part of African-American epistemology. It is inextricably interwoven into their existential framework.

There is some evidence, however, that some black parents have moved timidly away from this philosophical frame. In a study of racial identity in black children Spencer (in Hale, 1991) discovered that a number of African-American parents attempted to transcend race as they were going through the process of socializing their children. It was found that their intention was to rear their children as 'neutral children', or 'human beings' irrespective of the persistence of race. Children's selection of pictures shown, and stories read, indicated color preferences. Those children who made the most positive choices were children who had knowledge of African American history. Conversely, those children who made negative choices or demonstrated preferences for white images were missing the following experiences: parents who taught them about civil rights, parents who conveyed knowledge of African American history, parents who discussed racial discrimination. Spencer concluded that "the race transcendence position of some African American-parents is not compatible with the psychological intervention that is required to offset the socicultural factors that place African American-children at a disadvantage in American society. This humanistic or race-neutral posture is at odds with the events the child encounters over the course of his or her life span." (Hale, 1991, p. 8)

While empirical evidence does not support this "race neutral" posture as a growing

trend its very existence is unsettling to this educator. Black children, as do all children, need to have a firm sense of who they are; self-awareness and self-identity are critical components in the complexities of psychosocial and psycho emotional development. A strong sense of ethnic identity is critical to understanding who we are, and who we are in relationship to ethnic others. As we have seen in the stories of Gates (e.g., black consciousness club) and Morgan Lawrence (e.g., Negro-Ladies of Harlem) a strong sense of ethnic identity assisted in their personality development as well as their educational attainment. As an educator I have adopted the major tenets of Developmental theory which suggest strong correlates between learning and psychosocial development. Race neutrality contradicts these conceptions, and as such I strongly disapprove and discourage its growth.

In his research Billingsley (1992) found that on the whole contemporary African-American parents find that they must participate in a dual-type education. They must ready their children for school success, but must also "teach their children how to manage in a world and community where racial prejudice and discrimination are likely to be aimed against them." (p. 222) "Dual Education" appears to me to be the most reasonable approach to raising Black children giventhe fact that racism still persists in school settings and throughout the general American landscape. Failure to dually educate leaves children at the mercy of those who wish them well, but fail to provide the requisite mechanisms (i.e., adequate school funding, trackless schools, staff schooled in CRT, Engaged Pedagogy, multicultural curricula) that support educational achievement.

For Black Hegemony to survive as a vehicle for promoting academic achievement of

African-American children it needs sound parenting strategies that help children interpret and understand the pernicious persistence of racism that they will encounter throughout their lives. African-American parents and families need to use strategies to help their children cope with racist classroom practices and school policies that put them at risk of academic failure. Some viable strategies are offered by Hale (1991) in her article titled, *The Transmission of Cultural Values to Young African American Children*:

- Parents should be familiar with the vast amount of literature geared to African American children . . . This literature tells the stores of real-life . . . heros and heroines . . . who emerged from humble beginnings and suffered racial indignities but managed to triumph and become achievers. These stories transmit the message to . . . children that quicksand and landmines characterize the road to becoming an African American achiever . . However, they also transmit the message that it is possible to overcome these obstacles.

- Parents should refer to these stories about African American achievers when . . . children encounter racism and difficulties in their personal lives.

- Parents should realize that African American cultural values played an important part in the resiliency African Americans displayed against overwhelming oppression.

The wisdom and thinking of Theresa Perry is in sync and congruent with that of Hale's. She recommends that educators "Teach Malcolm X," a strategy for helping children understand their "powerful legacy of reading and writing" themselves into freedom. While she argues that our challenge as educators is to institutionalize in our schools, in their rituals and practices, this powerful epistemology: freedom for literacy and literacy for freedom" (Perry, p. 20), I argue that it is the families' role to do the same: to institutionalize in their homes, in their rituals and parenting practices, this powerful epistemology: freedom for literacy and literacy for freedom.

And finally, a review of the parental strategies evident in the lives of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence serves as a reminder that the suggested strategies of Hale, Perry and Lawrence are not new and unfamiliar to members of the African-American community. For example, Taulbert reminds us that his teachers (his mother being one) taught him about the 'big four',lessons he learned throughout his elementary and secondary years. Gates' story is distinguished by a mother who was an advocate and interventionist on his behalf, and a father who discussed and debated with him the burgeoning civil rights issues of their time. These debates provided him with a knowledge of and acquaintance with the persistent nature of racism. And, the storied life of Morgan Lawrence includes tales of Negro mentors-The Negro Ladies of Harlem-who helped her cope with issues of racism and adolescent identity. The long reach of her father's influence helped to make the necessary contacts and connections that extended and ensured her continued academic success. The stories of their lives can serve as a model for effective parenting. These models are especially important for contemporary parents as they teach their children how to over come, master and triumph over the realities of persistent racism.

Tatum's (1987) research on middle-class Black families revealed themes consistent with the dimensions of Black Hegemony. Themes which surfaced from her research were the importance of education and religious values. Most of the 10 families studied report having grown up in churches with predominantly Black congregations. However, they report a decline in involvement and attendance for a variety of reasons ranging from a loss of interest and a desire to rest and sleep late on Sundays. "However, the shift away from

organized religion is not necessarily a shift away from spirituality. As one woman explains:

> I'm just not involved in religion. . . . I haven't been involved for probably 16 or 18 years . . . . My concern is that the kids have a moral perspective and some values. . . I would not like to see the kids highly ritualize their religion. I would like to see it more internal than that. (p. 51)

This shift away from church participation as a support network and source of socialization can be problematic since the historically, the church was the social support of the whole community, the agent that organized their lives [according to Taulbert]. Perhaps, middle-class Blacks are finding other organizations and affiliations that substitute for what the church provided in previous years. In spite of this reality, church participation and membership continues to be a reality in the lives of most African-Americans, a means through which families can socialize their children. The next several paragraphs speak to this reality.

An examination of religious perspectives consistent with the African American epistemology on the value of education is appropriate. Murphy (1993), theologian and historian, believes that "African Americans have inherited a religious framework . . . through which their reality is interpreted and understood in issues of their well-being and ultimate destiny." (p. xxxiii). Evidences of this religious framework are laced throughout the stories of Clifton Taulbert and Margaret Morgan Lawrence. Taulbert's evaluative comments on the church and its epistemological meaning in their lives follow:

> It was closer to our hears than our homes--the colored church. It was more than an

institution, it was the very heartbeat of our lives. Our church was all our own, beyond the influence of whites, with its own societal structure" (p. 90). "Our lives centered around the colored church. It provided the framework for civic involvement, the backdrop for leadership, a safe place for social gatherings, where our babies were blessed, our families married and our dead respected. Yes, the colored church became the sanctuary for our dreams . . (pp. 105-106)

The evaluative insights of Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, co-writer of her mother's autobiography, reveal a similar perspective on the church and its influence:

The Holy Spirit was invisible and all-surrounding. Margaret learned to feel this Spirit as a strong presence in her life. She prayed regularly and sought comfort and strength from this source. (p. 61)

The Spirit offered support when Margaret faced tough challenges. (p. 61)

These evaluative comments support Murphy's premise of a "religious conceptual framework" through which life's realities are interpreted. This religious framework is endemic to Black Hegemony and consequently an essential dimension that should be transposed to the conscious parenting strategies of African-American families. Omission of this dimension puts African-American children at risk of losing a heritage entrenched in a religious framework that assisted its members in overcoming issues of educational discrimination and prohibition. The lives of Taulbert and Morgan Lawrence speak to the necessity of maintaining and facilitating such a conceptual frame.

The writings of Reverend Wallace Charles Smith (in Billingsley, 1992) on The Church in the Life of the Black Family, provides an important prescription for contemporary

African-American families. "He argues for what he calls 'a cooperative strategy' between church and community, he observes that the 'black family and the black church has drawn on each other for support and nurture. For them to develop a cooperative strategy suitable for dealing with the enormity of the problems, several shared realities must be understood. He lists these realities as a recognition that the black community is a suffering community, a community of extended families, and inclusive community, and adoptionist community, and finally, a hopeful community." (pp. 377-378) His writings suggest that a cooperative strategy would assist in the resolution of some issues that families face. While there are no specific strategies outlined in the pages cited, exemplary models, initiated by the Church and supported by its members and family, are contained within the pages of Climbing Jacob's Ladder, Billingsley's latest masterpiece:

- *Allen African Methodist Episcopal, Jamaica, Queens - New York*
  Allen Christian School. This school was formed in 1986 to provide quality education from prekindergarten to the eighth grade. In addition to a strong academic curriculum, the school provides spiritual and cultural enrichment.

- *Bridge Street African Methodist Episcopal, Brooklyn - New York*
  Parenting Program. The Parenting Program, founded in 1986 by Reverend Barbara Lucas, provides a broad range of support to one-and two-parent families, who are mostly poor or working class. It includes such activities as Big Brother, Big Sister Foster Grandparents, and Family Crisis Intervention. After-School Tutorial Program. The tutorial program, initiated in 1984, provides after-school academic assistance to under achieving black boys and girls between the ages of seven and seventeen.

- *Metropolitan Baptist Church, Washington D.C.*
  Adopt-a-School-Garrison Elementary. The church "adopted" Garrison Elementary School four years ago to provide Big Brothers and Big Sisters to children with poor academic performance.

- *New Hope Church of God in Christ, Atlanta - Georgia*
  Tutoring Program. This program provides educational assistance to students

having academic difficulty. It is sponsored by New Hope's Young People's Department and is targeted to black children between the ages of seven and fourteen. Members of the AKA Sorority at Spelman comprise the bulk of the volunteer tutors.

While the examples listed are few in number they represent only one or two of the many services offered by these churches. Additionally, these four churches are a few among many others mentioned in Billingsley's study. The extent to which African-American families participate in and support the work of Black churches, the greater is the likelihood that these cooperative strategies will be effective, the greater the likelihood that African-American children will achieve.

The African-American family is key to the sustaining influence of Black Hegemony in the lives of African-American children. There are many challenges to its efficacy as a vehicle for academic achievement, and to the effort optimism that has been operable throughout African American history. However, challenge is no stranger to the African-American family. It has been resilient and strong in its protection of its members. As Billingsley would say, "it has overcome obstacles and turned stumbling blocks into stepping stones." It has withstood the violent assault of a number of eras of American history: Slavery, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, Pre- Civil Rights. However, it's desire for a better life [Black Hegemony] sustained it through all of the years of painful, torturous, agonizing, discriminatory and unjust practices designed to unnerve, demoralize and dishearten the spirits of aspiring black children and their families. The adaptive and resilient African-American family has withstood the evils of past generations only to become an increasingly educated populace and it will withstand this new Post-Civil Rights

era that threatens to dismantle the progress made toward equal opportunity and equal access. "Struggle seems to bring forth the best efforts and most creative adaptations of the African-American people." (Billingsley, p.312).

As has already been emphasized through the voices of Taulbert, Gates and Morgan Lawrence, resilience, a faith in God, a belief in education the way-to-make-it, the value of family and community, and perseverance have acted as generative forces in the lives of African Americans. These dimensions of Black Hegemony have influenced school achievements of African-American students and allowed them to survive and triumph over social, civic and institutional racism. Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou understand the generative quality in African American culture, and express it in the vernacular of poetry. The poems that follow address this notion of generativity and provide powerful critique on the strong influence that Black Hegemony has had in the lives of African Americans:

Mother to Son

Well son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on
The floor - -Bare.
But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' On, And reaching' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the
dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So, boy, don't turn back.
Don't you set down on the
steps.
'Cause you finds it kinder hard.

Don't You fall now--
For I'se still goin', honey
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no
  crystal stair.
- Langston Hughes

This mother's appeal to her son provides motivation for him to persevere in spite of the odds. She prepares him for the stumbling blocks of life, while at the same time providing him hope that he can overcome through resilience and perseverance. This poem represents the kind of inspiration and motivation that has been a part of the African-American legacy, and a contributing influence in the school achievement of African-American children.

Still I Rise

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
you may trod me in the dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise . . .

- Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou's poem represents the hope that lies eternal in the spiritual beliefs that frame African-American beliefs, values and perspectives. It is this spiritual belief that has given rise to generations of oppressed Blacks. It is this belief that permitted families like Taulbert's, Gates' and Morgan Lawrence's to hope in spite of the harsh realities of their segregated lives, and it is the belief that is still found resident in contemporary families and their institutions (e.g., churches, schools, museums and recreational facilities) that enable the continued influences of Black Hegemony, in whatever form they may take, with

middle-class and lower-class African-American families.

Black Hegemony and all of its dimensions have served as forms of cultural capital enabling the emergence of academic excellence and educational accomplishments of Taulbert, Gates, and Morgan Lawrence, and the educational attainment of legions more. A careful examination of Black Hegemony through African-American voice, conveyed through literature and poetry, reveals an amazing legacy of academic achievement, one that merits greater study and illumination throughout the larger society and educational communities (e.g., Elementary, Secondary, Higher Education) in particular.

Black Hegemony is essentially a precursor to educational achievement for many African-American children. Its significance as a socialization process has great potential for assisting families and school communities in their efforts to assist African-American children as they strive toward school achievement and academic excellence. Further research on how African-American families of all classes adapt to societal changes is an important addendum to this thesis -- Black Hegemony is a significant influence in the school success of high-achievers. Further research in this area may well reveal that it is a significant influence in the school success of all students.

Black Hegemony has a magical and generative quality that turns "stumbling blocks into stepping stones." It is not a panacea for academic achievement, rather an historical reality that has important implications for the academic achievement and school success of contemporary African-American children.

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Figure 1-1

BLACK HEGEMONY **The dynamic process through which African-American children are successfully socialized into the academic world. It is a complex constellation of beliefs, values, traditions and behaviors resident within African-Americans and the diverse households/communities in which they live. The hegemonic interests of African Americans appears more cultural than structural in nature with strong emphasis on the following components:**
Emphasis on education as "the" way to make it
Family and Spiritual Values
Hard work and stick-to-it-ness
Perseverance
Resilience
Political and Social Activism
Capacity to struggle in the face of adversity

Figure 1-2

Cultural Capital		
Bourdieu	**Swidler**	**Murphy**
"Family Life provides resources ('capital') which yield important social profits. . ." Conceptions based in French Society; center on social class and its role in influencing school achievements and status attainment.	Conceptions conveyed as a : " . . tool-kit of symbols, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems"	Conceptions based in African-American culture. Resources of African-American family and community have been transformed into resources that influence and facilitate success and adjustment in school settings. Transformative resources of the African-American community include components of Black Hegemony, for example: emphasis on education as "the" way-to-make-it, and the twin companions of resilience and perseverance. Resources served to immunize African-American students against racism and to allow them to navigate their way through oppressive educational institutions, systems and classroom practices.

Figure 1-3

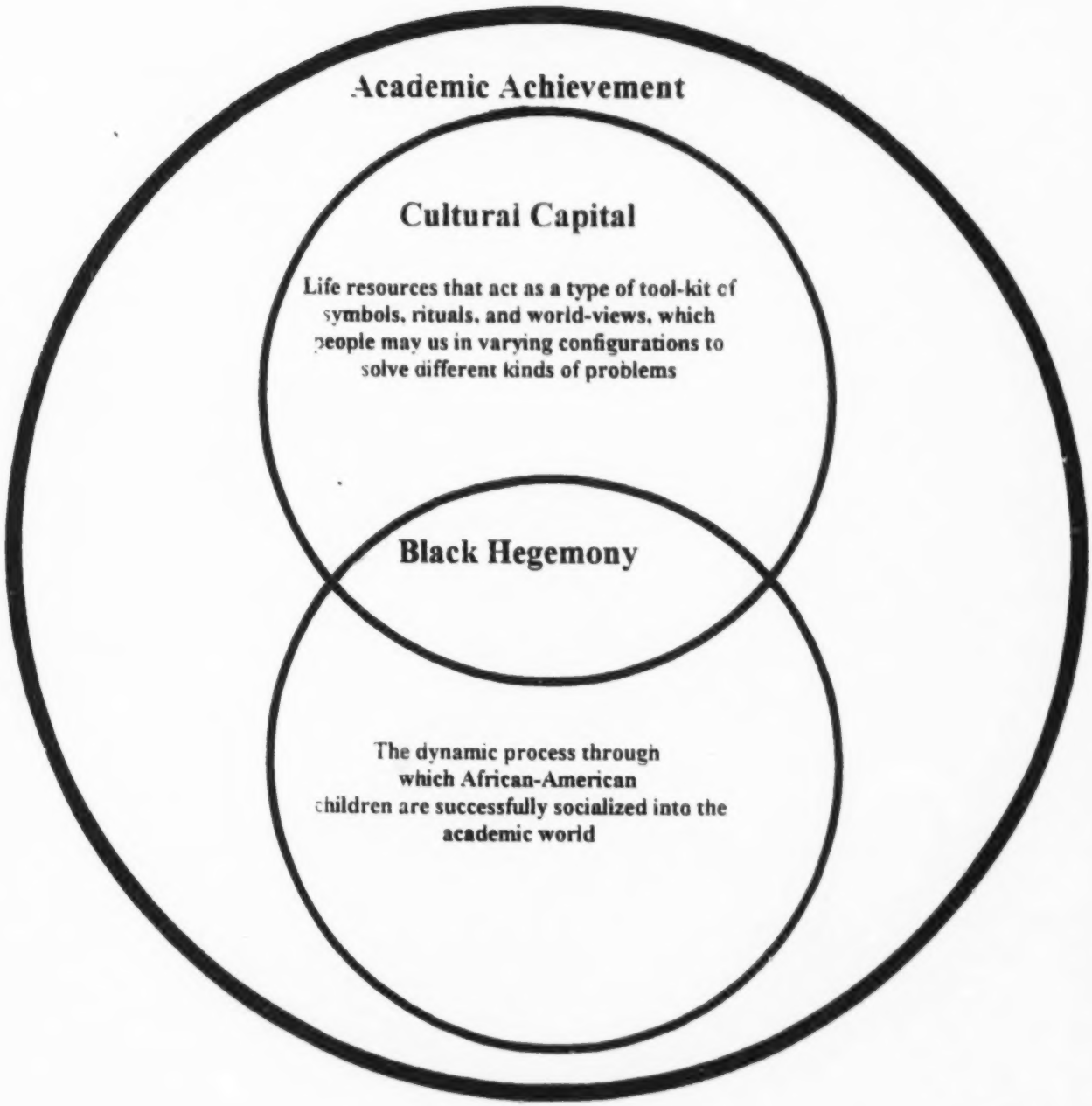
Academic Achievement
Cultural Capital
Life resources that act as a type of tool-kit of symbols, rituals, and world-views, which people may us in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems
Black Hegemony
The dynamic process through which African-American children are successfully socialized into the academic world

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Figure 2-1

Literature Review

Legacy of achievemt.	*Education as a holy grail*	*Af.Am. families are functional*	*Centrality of relig. and spirituality*	*Psych. P of persev. and resilience*
M. Foster- Af.Am. Educators communicate decades of achievement.	**Am. Con. on Educ.** -3/4ths of students come from homes of parents without college educ.	**R. Clark-**overall quality of family interactions influence achievement. not family composit.	**K. Osborne-** churches provided relig. Instruc and training in literacy skills	
E-Morrison -32 successful black women-worked hard to get where they are ...love and support of parents and grandparents	**Hill-** "Strengths of Black Families"=strong achievement orientation	**Hill** -strengths strong kinship bonds, strong work orientation, adaptability, high achievement orientation, religious orient.	**P. Paris-**relig. & moral values are in the Af.-Am. Exper. Values of reciprocity, fam. and traditional understandings of God	**Fr. Douglas-** judge Negro by the depths from which they have risen, not heights to which they have risen
H.L.Gates, Jr.- documents their ascent and struggles within Af.-Am. Culture	**C. Taulbert** - friend encouraged him to go all the way, do good in school, be a Dr	**Gates-** conversations and debates with father about civil rights movement	**Taulbert-**ch., colored was the very heartbeat of our lives...a totally blk. exp.	**Taulbert** -100 miles round trip to the cl. school-white school blocks away
Bates&Hudson -"Basic Black" Responsibility to pass on torch to next generations.	Educ. Imp. ...when we slaves we risked death to learn to write..enormous sacrifices made	**G. Lawrence-** fam. Val. Same as Hills and + parent children relations	**Bates&Hudson** -soc. progams housed in churches, religious life remains central	
A. Billingsley- for more than 100 years each generation of blacks has been more educated than the one before		**Billingsley-** argues that longevity and coherence is due to resilience and resourcefulness within families	**L. Murphy-** religion functions to addresses issues of identity, security and purposiveness	**Wilson-Sadberry**captures strength of Af-Am. Males in college-strengths=resilience and perseverance

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Figure 3-i

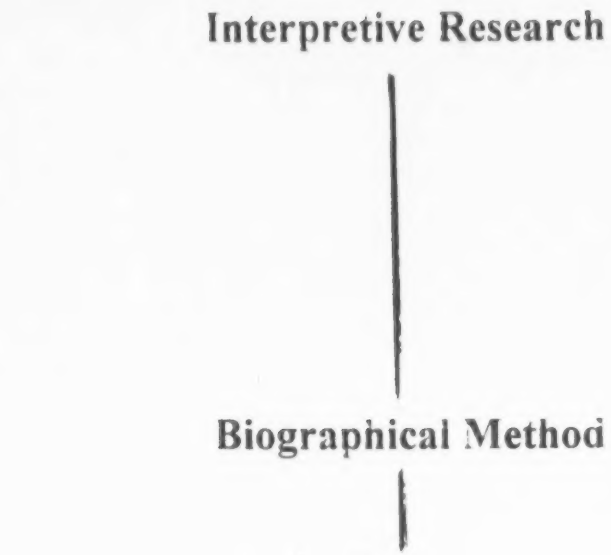

Interpretive Research
Biographical Method
Taulbert
Gates
Morgan Lawrence

Figure 3-2

Forms of Data Analysis: Interpretivism, Labov's Evaluation Model, Dimensions of Black Hegemony

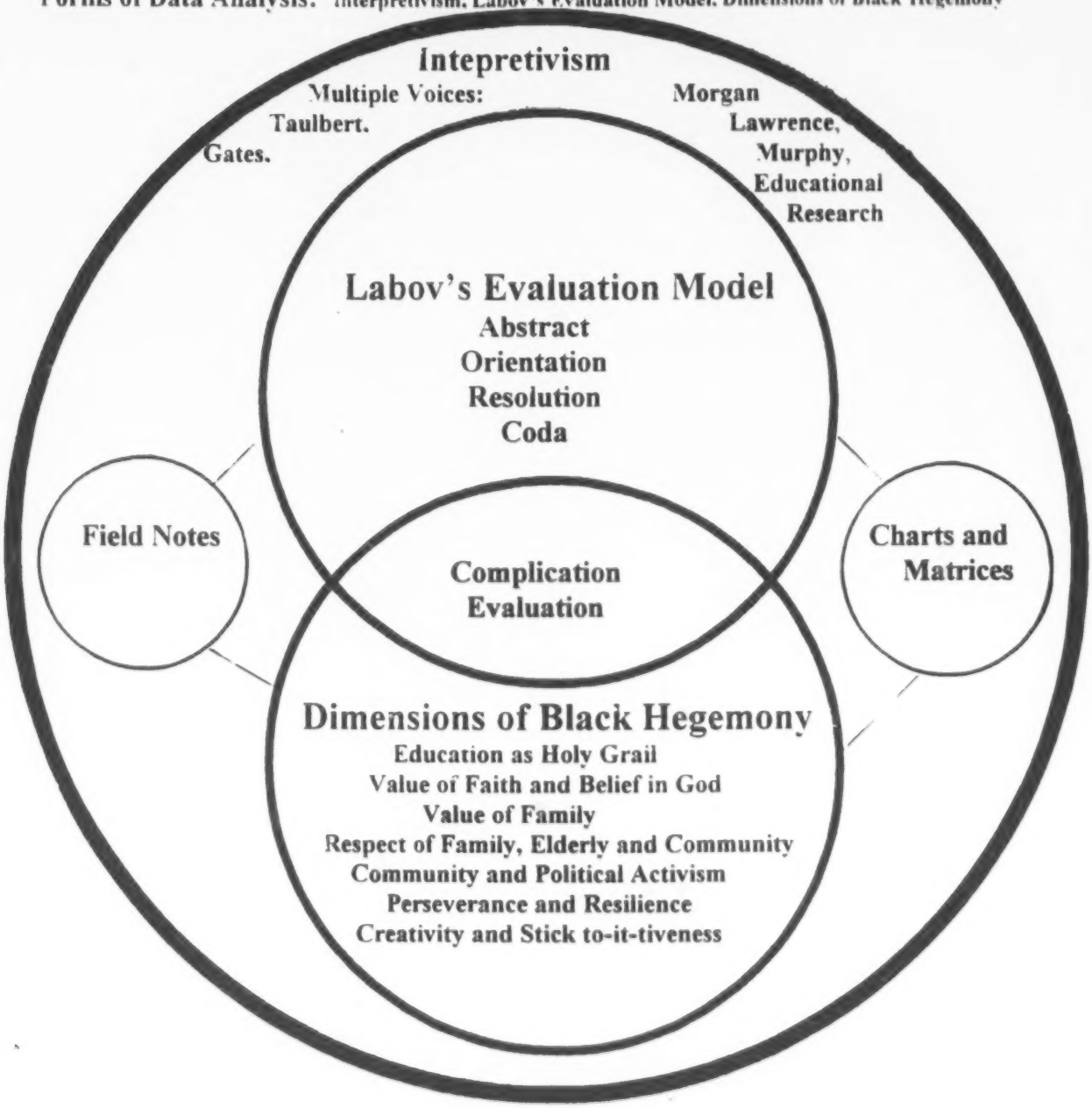


Figure 3-3

Variance in Participants' Writing Styles and Their Influences on Data Analysis

Labov's Evaluation Model

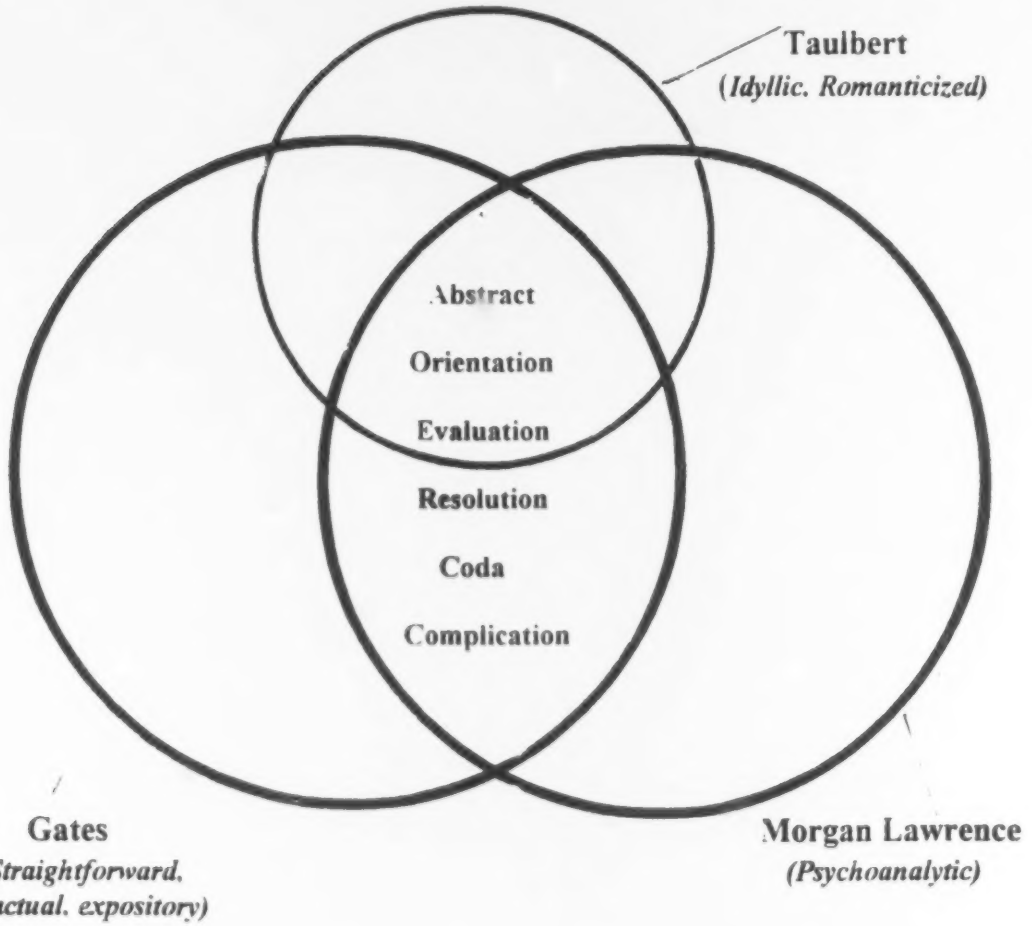
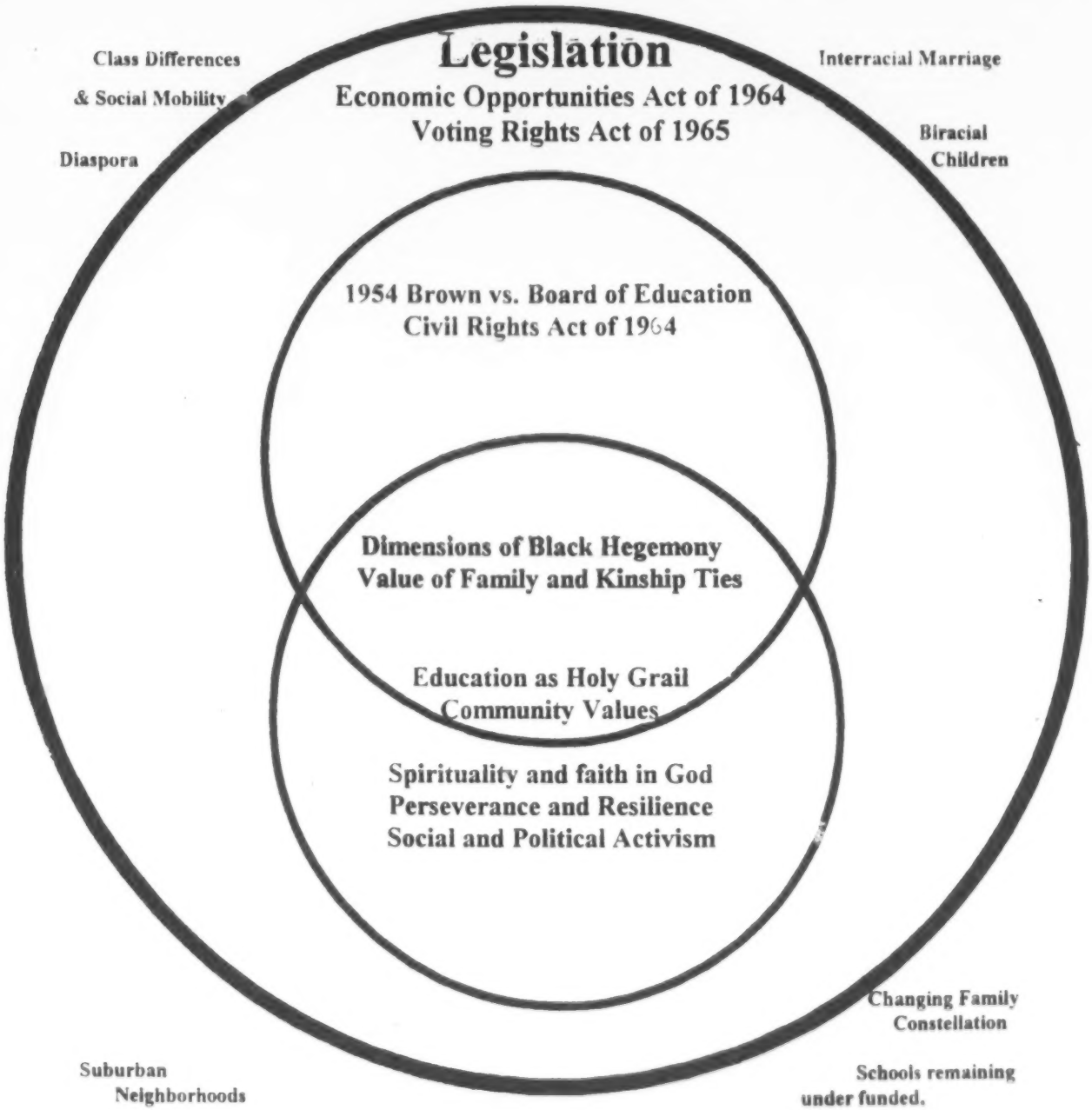


Figure 8-1

20th Century Challenges to Black Hegemony